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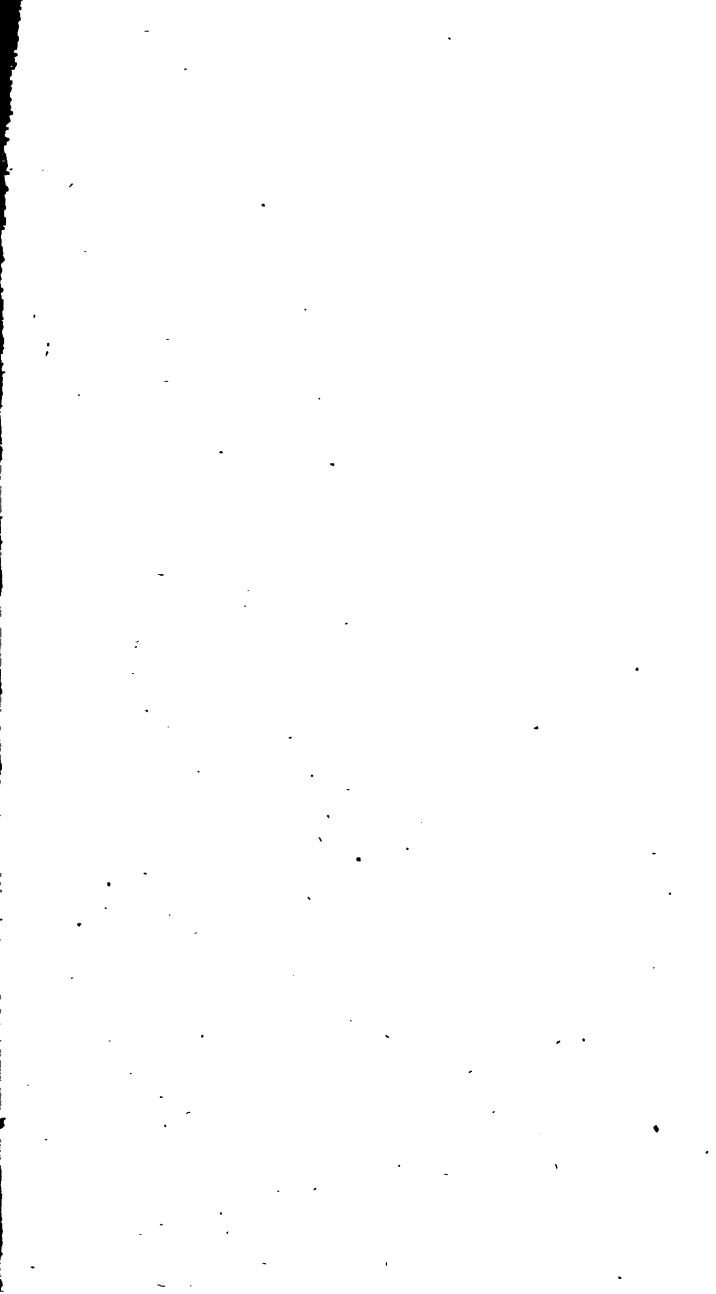


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VOLUME THE TENTH.





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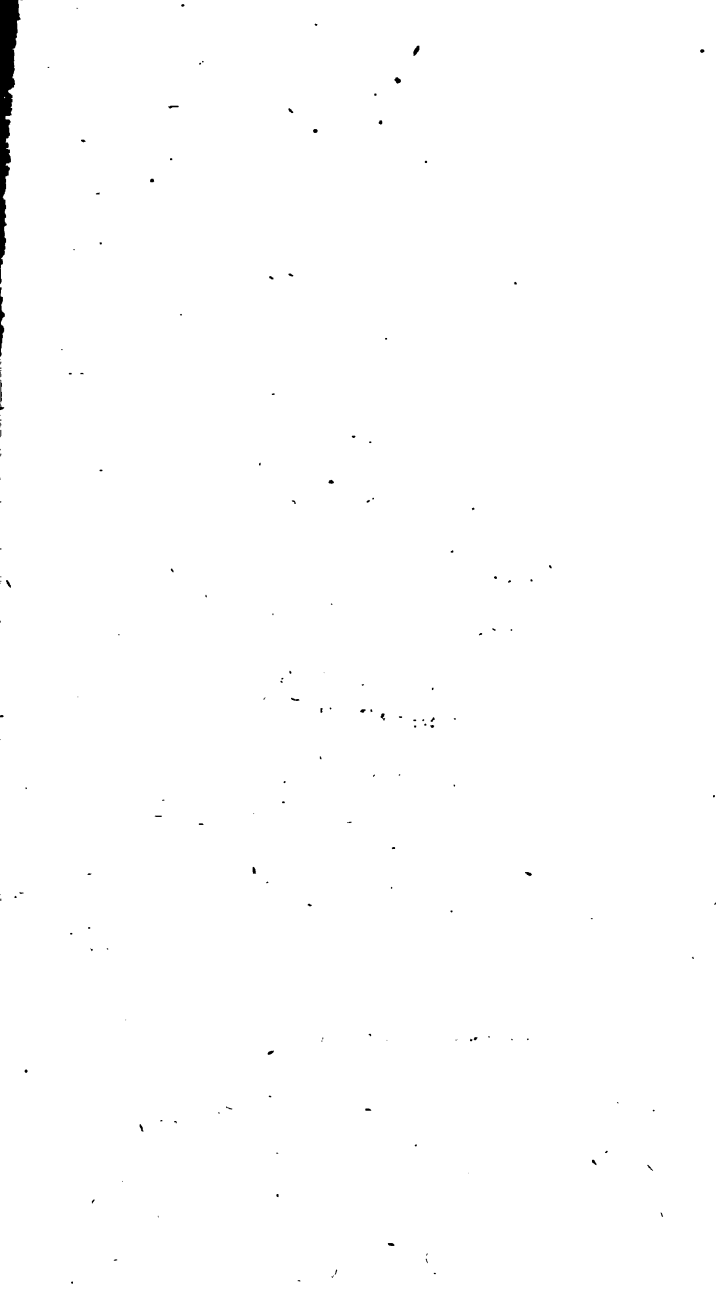
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— now answer

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A TRAGEDY. BY AARON HILL.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE-ROYAL DRURY-LANE.

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BY MR. *Daphnis* PROMPTER.

CHARACTERISTICS.

I am no stranger to myself—I grew gray—Beneath a weight of winters spent in arms—What avails vain title till some sword like mine support it—I am above descent, and prize no blood—Scarcely is my own left mine; 't is lost for glory—Spilt in my country's cause—My ambition climbs beyond progeny—To spring from gods is less than mine who like a god command.

POLYPHONTES.

Forefight and Fierceness are the brave man's gods—And his own hand supports him—If they come, Narbas and Eumenes, their gods must march before them—Or not Alcides' blood could scape the shedding—Chance it as it may—Whenever Eumenes this way comes he comes to die.

EROS.

I glow'd with all the god—Swiftly I clos'd, seiz'd the steel—On himself turn'd his pointed weapon, sav'd my breast—And plung'd it in his own—Inborn virtue can borrow no enlargement, but lends to all—That keeps contempt from titles—Oh for the sword once more your guards took from me—Now, now I feel these chains; now first they bind me—Cover the eyes of cowards, mine disdain—Mine can with steadfast and advancing scorn—Look in Death's face full lighted—When it comes 't is to be met not hid—Now, ye Immortals! not to die were not to triumph—'Tis the brave's prerogative to feel without complaining—If I must fall I will—I go to try—I task but my own heart and Heaven to aid me—The felt god, the god glows in me—And every springy nerve is active fire—Trunk my armlets if I hear a heart that poorly pants for a base hour of life—On to the work of Fate—it calls me hence—I hear and I obey.

EUMENES.

Doubt but my power's defect; my will finds none—Hard truth due from firm loyalty to weak distress—I watch with guardful eye these murderers' motions—With determin'd hand prepar'd to save Eumenes—Come what must I will failing to protect partake your fall.

EUR.

Polyphontes! every curse of death surround him—I trac'd the fiend thro' all his dark disguises—In the pierc'd infant breasts of two doom'd innocents—I saw him plunge his poignard, twice receiv'd it—Deep in my own, encumber'd with my charge—Struggling to bear the third sav'd prince to shelter—And track'd by my own blood with pain escap'd him—Eumenes dead!—Blas't my soul's best hope—Who dar'd this villany—This gush of joy—I give you back my trust, my king, Eumenes—Shall he be a king—My joys grow too strong—Oh! happy day!

NARBAS.

Perish the heart that swells from another's losses—Curse on all interest that includes not honesty—I see the abyss before me—If I plunge in and crush this Polyphontes 't is but to fall for vengeance—Princes should be above self-securing, and live for truth or die for glory—I will pierce my own heart, so die reveng'd and safe—See what marks denote the queen—What difference 'twixt the guilty and the wronged—Would I had power equal to my wrongs—The daughter, mother, wife, ah me! widow, of a king—Cresphontes had scorn'd to doubt me for a moment less than Merope—I seek him in the glooms below.

MEROPE.

What a blindness is this of human grandeur—Give me, Gods! a cottage and concealment—Save the queen, and from the curse of courts remotely place me—Oh! teach my willing feet to find some gloom—Dark as my prospects, deep enclos'd for safety—And silent as the brow of midnight sleep.

ISMENE.



EDINBURG:

At the Apollo Press, by THE MARTINS, for Bell, LONDON, 1782.



PROLOGUE.

TOUCH'D be your generous hearts to spare this play,
 Where mirth wou'd laugh humanity away.
 Two thousand years our tale has shook the stage,
 And mov'd the heart of Greece from age to age :
 Ev'n Alexander wept our queen's despair,
 And the world's conqueror sat conquer'd there.
 What reach of taste could Attick pride presume,
 What flame of courage e'er distinguish'd Rome,
 But Britain's sons may boast an equal merit
 Would Britons think and act with British spirit ?
 Ye flat'ring triflers of an hour too short,
 Ye fools to thinking and ye friends of sport,
 Forbear to laugh when pensively distressed.
 Sighs in yon' circle swell the beauteous breast ;
 Charms to the fairest face soft sorrow lends ;
 Pity and innocence are bosom friends ;
 And when deep anguish shakes a feeling mind
 How must it ake when witslings sneer behind ?
 Nor dream, ye gay, that only mirth should please ;
 No sprightly wit e'er laugh'd off life's disease :
 Experience tells us soon or late comes care,
 And he who flies from thought will meet despair.
 Ladies, be firm to passion's tend'rest claim ;
 Sighs are love's breezes, and will fan the flame.
 Laughing gallants may promise merry lives,
 But laughing husbands make you weeping wives.
 They whose own hearts can feel will treat your's best,
 And he give pain that thinks it but a jest.
 Nobly weep out, nor let an illtim'd blush
 Keep back the struggling tear that longs to gush.
 All that are wise and brave by nature know
 'Tis virtue's mark to weep at others' wo.

Dramatis Personæ.

MEN.

POLYPHONTES, general of Mycene,	<i>Drury-Lane.</i>
ERIX, favourite of Polyphontes,	Mr. Palmer.
EUMENES, son of Merope,	Mr. Hurst.
EURICLES, a lord of Merope's party,	Mr. Cautherley.
NARBAS, fosterfather to Eumenes,	Mr. Aickin.
	Mr. Packer.

WOMEN.

MEROPE, widow of the late king,	Miss Younge.
ISMENE, daughter of Narbas,	Miss Hopkins.

Chief Priest, and other Priests.

Ladies, Officers, Guards, &c.

M E R O P E †.

ACT I.

SCENE, *an apartment in the palace.*

MEROPE *mournful on a couch*, ISMENE *leaning melancholy below*
and Attendants.

ISMENE.

SEE where the lone majestick mourner weeps,
Loft ev'n to musick's pow'r†—Try, strain each note
In melody's wide compass—haply
Some change thro' sad to lively may have force
To strike recov'ring sense and wake regard.
—First in low sympathy of sorrow's softness
Sooth her dejected soul—then start at once
To swells of joy, and storm Attention's ear. [*Musick with
trumpets. After the musick Merope rises and comes forward.*]

Mer. Let me, when next thy too officious love,
Faithful Ismene, tries th' harmonious charm,
Let me have musick solemn all and slow,
Sad-suited to my thoughts—Mix not for me,
Who have no pow'r to taste, such sprightly notes,
As they who are more happy find more sweet.

Ism. Why when the gods grow gentle are you sad?
You felt their anger sharply—now they smile,
Embrace their proffer'd bounty—All the lords
Of glad Mycene, in full senate met,
Take measures to proclaim you reigning queen;
You whom distress but brightens, to whose charms,
Made awful by your grief, woes add new majesty.

Mer. What, no news yet of Narbas or my son?

Ism. May it be soon—No prince of birth like his,
Where'er conceal'd, can scape such search unknown.

Mer. Will ye at length, ye Pow'rs! reward my tears?
Will ye at last restore Eumenes to me?
If he yet live—this only remnant heir

† The lines distinguished by inverted commas are omitted in the representation.

Of his wrong'd mother's miseries, oh save him!
 From his dear breast strike wide the murd'rer's dagger.
 Is he not your's, a branch from great Alcides?
 "What tho', (forget it and be hush'd, oh faith!)"
 What tho' to traitors' prosp'rous swords you gave
 His father's fated life—Ah! yet desert not
 This image of his form that fills my soul!

Ism. Dear tho' he doubtless was, and justly mourn'd,
 Should you exclude all sense of bliss beside?

Mer. I am a mother—with a mother's fears.

Ism. But can a mother's fears efface the stamp
 Of hero's soul that marks a race like your's?
 Sweet tho' his infant smiles, they dwell too fix'd,
 Too deep, on your touch'd memory—Long years
 Are past since first you lost him.

Mer. Lost him!—never—

In twice sev'n dreadful years no moment's light
 Broke on my eyes but brought his image with it.
 Why tell'st thou me of time?—days, months, and years,
 Have grown, but with 'em grew my pain to lose him.
 Weigh that last fatal hint thy father sent me;
 Hope soon, said he, to see the Prince Eumenes
 All you would wish—Fear all from Polyphontes.

Ism. Wisely you fear him—but 't were wiser still
 So fearing to prevent him. Hear the states;
 Quit at their pray'r this regent's name; be crown'd,
 And rise indeed the queen they meant to make you.

Mer. Is not the crown my son's?

Ism. A son so lov'd,
 Should he return, would thank——

Mer. Perish the heart
 That, meanly proud, and poorly fill'd for self,
 Swells from another's losses!

Ism. Publick interest——

Mar. Curse on all interest that includes not honesty!
 But here ev'n interest brings no plea to tempt me.
 What can a childless mother hope from empire?
 What has distress to do with pomp's vain lustre?
 I see the very light of heav'n with pain.
 Never shall splendour cheer these blasted eyes
 That saw my bleeding lord, my murder'd children,
 Saw my friends fall, saw men and gods forsake me.

Oh guilt! oh perfidy! oh death's dire day!

Present for ever to my frightened soul.

Ism. Oft' have I wept to hear that sad day's tale.

Mer. I hear it now—ev'n yet their cries rise round me;
Save, save the king! save the poor gasping princes!
Save the distracted queen!—I scream—I fly—
On ev'ry side I turn, meet battling crowds,
Swords, glitt'ring spears, loud shouts, and mingled groan—
Meet last—a fight—beyond all sense of horror! [ings;
Meet an expiring husband's outstretch'd eye,
Strain'd with a death-mix'd tenderness on mine—
And struggling from his blood to reach and clasp me.

Ism. Patience, oh Madam! and forget these horrors.

Mer. There two expiring infant suff'ers fell,
The eldest of our loves—duteous in death
Cross the king's breast they threw their little bodies,
And lent their hands—weak aid! to save their father:
Only Eumenes scap'd th' assassins' fury;
Some interposing god vouchsaf'd to veil him;
And he who screen'd him then may once restore him.
Narbas, thy wife thy faithful father, bore him
Far from my sight to some dark safe retreat,
“Some desert barren of distress and man.”

Enter EURICLES.

Ism. Madam———Lord Euricles———

Mer. Welcome———What hope?

Eur. Vain was our search—from Peneus' bank it spread
O'er vast Olympus: far and wide thro' Greece
Inquiry lab'ring lost its fruitless pray'r:
Description could not wake the least idea:
None knew, none ever heard, of Narbas' name!

Mer. Alas, he breathes no more!—my son is dead.

Ism. So fear makes real ev'ry fancy'd wo.
You've heard that on report of this new peace
My father guides him secret to our hopes.

Eur. Just was his caution! Narbas, wisely loyal,
Vells his return, and cautiously conveys him.
Narbas knows all his dangers—I mean-while
Watch with a guardful eye these murd'ers' motions,
And with determin'd hand prepare to save him.

Mer. On faith so try'd as thine ev'n wo leans easy.

Eur. Doubt but my pow'r's defect; my will finds none.
But I have news more threat'ning:

Th' assembled senate vòte, in warm debate,
A consort in your crown——

Mer. Presumptuous care!
You should have call'd it insult.

Eur. Words were vain.
Truth unsustain'd by pow'r but fights to fall.
The partial people roar for Polyphontes,
And right, and law, and pity, sink before him.

Mer. Can Fortune then reduce the great to pity?
Can kings in their own realms contract to slaves?

Eur. Something must be resolv'd to check their speed.

Mer. Yes, I will face these lords of kings and law,
Comets of empire; these portentous stars
That sparkle by the fire they steal from majesty:
I will go dart truth's lightning in their eyes,
And thunder in their ears the rights of thrones:
I will revive lost sense of trust and duty,
I will assert their sov'reign's near return. [Going.]

Eur. Oh Heaven! be wary——that way ruin lies.
Their tyrant leader starts already fir'd
By that alarm, and dreams of what he dreads.

Mer. What can he more, so much already done?

Eur. Jealous of danger men make haste in guilt,
Work to be safe, and hold no means too wicked.
Mycene, but by faction freed from faction,
Claim'd like a conquest he computes his own.
No tie so sacred binds endanger'd valour
Where hot ambition spurs it——Ev'ry rampart
Gives way before him; law corrupted guards him;
Wealth dresses, Poverty attends, Pride leads,
And Priesthood presses gods who hate—to serve him.

Mer. I see th' abyss before me——Let it be:
If I plunge in and crush this Polyphontes
'Tis but to fall for vengeance.

Eur. Soft!—he comes. [Exeunt Euricles and Ismene.]

Mer. Wear, for a moment, heart! the veil thou hat'st.

Enter POLYPHONTES.

Pol. Ever in tears my queen!—Lend a long truce
To sighs, and cast aside your needless sorrow:
Shake from those injur'd eyes each cloud that dims 'em,
And to the voice of Love vouchsafe your ear.
You frown——

Mer. I do indeed, and gaze with horreur.

Pol. Gaze on—I am no stranger to myself,
Nor to a woman's passions. I grew gray
Beneath a weight of winters spent in arms.
I know time's furrows are no paths to love;
I know it all—but wisdom knows it not.
Weigh not my offer in disdain's light balance.
You are the daughter, mother, wife, of kings;
But the state wants a master. What avails
Vain title till some sword like mine supports it?

Mer. Bold subject of a king who call'd me wife,
Dar'st thou defame the mem'ry of thy lord
With such audacious hope?—Aspire to me!
Me to supplant my child, my heart's whole care,
Stain his dishonour'd throne with guilt and thee!
Me canst thou dream so base to wed thy lowness,
And crown with empire's wreath a soldier's brow?

Pol. Soldier! immortal gods! who more deserves
To govern states than he who best can save?
He who was first call'd King ere that was soldier;
Great because brave, and scepter'd by his sword.
I am above descent, and prize no blood:
Scarce is my own left mine; 't is lost for glory,
Spilt in my country's cause, in your's, fair scorner!
Take safety—'t is my gift. Fill half my throne;
My party calls all mine; love shares it your's.

Mer. Party! thou fell provoker of reproach!
Party should tremble where a monarch rules.

Pol. There will be parties, and there must be kings,
And he who best can curb was form'd to reign.
I who reveng'd your lord by right succeed him.

Mer. Succeed him, traitor!—Has he not a son?
Gods were his great forefathers—thence his claim.

Pol. Far other value bears Mycene's crown.
Right to rule men is now no longer held
By dull descent, like land's low hermitage;
'Tis the pluck'd fruit of toil; 't is the paid price
Of blood lost nobly; and 't is thence my due. [hope?

Mer. What hast thou done, thou wretch! to dare such

Pol. Bethink you of that day when these proud walls
Blush'd with the blood you boast from traitors' swords.
Review your helpless husband—see your sons

Expiring round you—wipe those gushing eyes,
 And view me what I was, not then too low
 To share your ruffled passions—Yes, 't was I
 From your freed palace chas'd th' o'erwhelming foe,
 Sav'd your Herculean sceptre and its queen;
 I, I repell'd the woes you could but weep.
 See there my right, my rank, my claim, to love!

Mer. Hear, hear him, Heav'n, and give me back my son!

Pol. Yes, let him come, this son—he shall be taught
 Lessons of glory, taught my arts to reign.
 Joy to the blood of Hercules!—I too
 Revere, let others dread it—My ambition
 Climbs beyond progeny—To spring from gods
 Is less than mine who like a god command.

Mer. If thou wouldst emulate a god be just:
 Man can be brave too boldly—Hercules
 Sav'd many a king—but did he steal their diadems?
 Wouldst thou resemble Hercules—protect
 Unfriended innocence, assert thy prince,
 Restore th' unhappy wand'rer to my arms,
 Cease to afflict, and give him to my fondness.
 Thus could thy influence move, so try'd, so courted,
 Who knows—for gratitude has pow'r like love—
 Who knows—how far I might forget my glory—
 And—if peace dwells with thee—Expect it not—
 I will not bid you hope—that I can stoop
 So low—bend I am sure I cannot. [*Exit Mer.*]

Enter EROX.

Erox. Ent'ring I heard her too presumptuous scorn,
 And wonder'd at your patience. Waits a king
 For a weak woman's wish to fix his throne?
 Greatly and bravely have you clear'd your way
 To the hill's foot, yet when it courts your climbing
 Fall back to sigh, and seek her hand to lead you.

Pol. Near as thou think'st I stand my warier eye
 Marks 'twixt the throne and me a precipice
 Where Faith or I fall headlong—Does not Merope
 Know her Eumenes near?—Should he return
 Th' inconstant people would with shouts receive him,
 And smoothe his way to empire o'er my bosom.
 Thou know'st from proofs most timely intercepted
 This new boy-king returns, and hopes Mycene.

Erox. Trust your high fortune, and disdain to doubt.
Forefight and Fierceness are the brave man's gods,
And his own hand supports him.

Pol. My late order—

Erox. 'Twas with a silent firmness well obey'd.
From Elis to Mycene ev'ry road
Is watch'd by sleepless warders—If they come,
Narbas and he, their gods must march before them,
Or not Alcides' blood could scape the shedding.
Your soldiers' zeal is warm.

Pol. But is it blind?

Erox. It is—none knows his name whose life he waits;
All they have yet been told is a sad tale
Of an old wily traitor leading with him,
On murd'rous purpose, an assassin youth
Urg'd by exacted oaths to seek your death.

Pol. But what this rumour of Misanthus kill'd
Before Alcides' temple?—is that true?

Erox. Too sure he fell—I chose his trusty arm,
Join'd with his martial brother's, as most fit
To guard that likeliest station, where should Narbas
Dare with his exile touch Mycene's border
First they would rest to beg that godhead's care
From whom their race presumes its proud descent.

Pol. 'Twas forecast worthy of a zeal like thine,
Nor could thy care have chosen an abler hand,
Or one more try'd in blood, than that Misanthus.
'Twas he, thou know'st, that faithful to my cause,
On that black night attending near Cresphontes,
Taught the king's sword amid the dusk of slaughter
To pierce its master's breast—An act so daring
Deserv'd the sword, tho' three rich gems adorn'd it:
He had it, and he wore it for his pains.

Erox. Yet at Alcides' temple drew it rashly,
And lost it with his life.

Pol. How scap'd his brother?

Erox. Scar'd out of mem'ry's use, all he could tell me
Was, that the god inspir'd some dreadful form,
Some more than mortal monster—and he fled.

Pol. Vile safety!—left his brother unreveng'd,
And shunn'd a soldier's death—We must be watchful.

Some infelt bodings bid me call this stranger
Eumenes or his friend.

Erox. That fear was mine,
Till on reflection that he came alone
It look'd unlikely—Chance it as it may
When'er he this way comes he comes to die.

Pol. True—yet I cou'd have wish'd to spare this crime;
But one first chosen the rest grew necessary :
So falls the son—the mother must not follow ;
Her I have need of. Marriage mends my reign ;
Her rightful title consecrates ambition,
And usurpation whitens into law.

—The people love her : I possessing her
Hold her friend too in dowry—*Erox !*—thou
Whose fate grows close to mine, assist my scheme.
Skill'd how to spread craft's nets, allure the people,
Train 'em by ev'ry art ; poise ev'ry temper ;
Avarice will sell his soul ; buy that and mould it ;
Weakness will be deluded ; there grow eloquent,
Is there a tott'ring faith ? grapple it fast
By flatt'ry, and profusely deal my favours ;
Threaten the guilty, entertain the gay,
Frighten the rich, find wishes for the wanton,
And rev'rence for the godly—let none scape thee :
Dive into hearts, sound ev'ry nature's bias—
And bribe men by their passions—But these arts,
Already thine, why waste I time to teach thee ?
Vainly the sword successful scales a throne,
Since Fortune changing strength's lost hope is flown,
But art call'd in attracts reluctant will,
And what were lost by pow'r is gain'd by skill. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE, *the palace.*

Enter MEROPE, EURICLES, ISMENE.

MEROPE.

Is the world dumb on my Eumenes' fate ?

Ism. Calamity too soon had found a tongue.

Mer. Has nothing from the borders yet been heard ?

Eur. Nothing that claims your notice.

Mer. Who is he,

This prisoner, I am told but now brought guarded?

Eur. A rash young stranger, caught with guilty hand
Red from the recent marks of some new murder.

Mer. A murder! an unknown!—Whom has he kill'd?
How? and where was it?—I am fill'd with horror.

Ism. Oh, sense too lively of maternal love!
All things alarm your tenderness. You hear
Chance speak, and take her voice for that of Nature.

Mer. What is his name? whence came he? why unknown?

Eur. He seems, and is, if truth may trust appearance,
A youth of that soft stamp which Fortune leaves
To Nature's gentlest care; some nymph's Adonis,
Whose eye might sooner be suppos'd to kill
Th' un pity'd maid than his gay sword the man.

Mer. Whom (tell me) has he kill'd--answer--I'll see him.

Eur. What strange emotion this!—

Mer. No matter—bring him:
If I discover guilt t'is mine to punish;
If wrong'd I owe him mercy.

Eur.—Should he have merit
'Tis plac'd so low by Fortune—

Mer. Fortune's faults,
Where merit suffers, call on kings to mend 'em.

Eur. What can a wretch like this deserve from pow'r?

Mer. Oh Euricles! look inward; ask thy heart;
Be for a moment but this wretch thyself—
And then acquit the pow'r that scorn'd to note thee.
“—Besides, who knows? he may—Be still, prompt fear.
“Perhaps my troubled mind starts hints too lightly:
“Hearts that have ev'ry thing to fear slight nothing.
“—Let him be brought—I will myself examine him.”

Eur. Your will must be obey'd.

Mer. Go, my Ismene,
Bid those who guard the pris'ner bring him hither. [*Ex. Ism.*

Mer. Stay, Euricles; [*Euricles offering to go.*
Stay, and partake more terrors—Cou'd you think it?
Press'd by new sorrows I forget my past,
And have not yet inform'd you—Polyphontes
Has dar'd demand my hand, dar'd talk of marriage.

Eur. Oh Queen!

I know his offer'd insult, know it stains
Your name, yet blushing add—your forc'd consent,
Grown infamously necessary—stands
The sole safe bar 'twixt all your race and ruin.

Mer. " 'Tis horror but to think so vile a dream !

Eur. " So thinks the army—so the senate thinks,
" So think th' exacting gods—and so——

Mer. " The gods!——

" Why were they nam'd—could they forgive such fall
" From their own offspring to a son of clay?"

Eur. The king your son——

Mer. Ah! name not him—How, Euricles,
How wou'd he thank my choice of such a father?

Eur. Princes grow wise by sorrows: he will see
That hated choice the root of all his safety.

Mer. What, what have you been telling me?

Eur. Hard truth,
Due from firm loyalty to weak distress.

Mer. Can Euricles then plead for Polyphontes?

Eur. I know him guilty—but I knew him rash,
Know him resistless—know him childless too,
And know you love Eumenes.

Mer. Loving him
How can I chuse but hate the hand that wrongs him?
Princes shou'd be above these self-securings,
And born to live for truth—or die for glory.

[*Sits and weeps, regardless of Eumenes' entrance.*

Enter ISMENE; Guards, with EUMENES in chains.

Eum. to Ism.] Is that the queen so fam'd for miseries?

Ism. It is.

Eum. How sweetly awful!—how adorn'd by sorrows!

Ism. Why dost thou pause? the Queen admits thee nearer.

Eum. No wonder so much sweetness, so distress'd,
Mov'd ev'n so greatly distant—as to me,
And drew me from my desert!—Give me leave
To stand a while—and gaze unmark'd and note her.
——Oh ye protecting gods! whate'er becomes
Of an abandon'd nameless thing like me,
Bless this supreme unfortunate!

Ism. Madam—the prisoner waits.

Mer. turning to observe him.] A murderer this!—
Come forward stranger.

—A mien like this a murd'rer's!—Can it be
That looks so form'd for truth, so mark'd for innocence,
Cover a cruel heart?—Come nearer youth!

Thou art unhappy; bid that Fate protect thee,
And speak as to an ear that loves the wretched.

Answer me now—Whose was the blood thou shedd'st?

Eum. Oh Queen!—Yet--for a moment--spare my tongue.

Mer. Murder and modesty!—whence all this shame!

Eum. Respect, confusion—something here—unnam'd,
And never felt till now—have bound my tongue;
But oh! do justice to your pow'r to shake me,
And let not hesitation pass for guilt.

Mer. Go on--who was he whom I'm told thou hast kill'd?

Eum. One who with wrongs and insult urg'd my rashness.
Young blood takes fire too aptly.

Mer. Young! was he young?

Ice at my conscious heart were warm—compar'd
With what he chills my soul with!—Didst thou know him?

Eum. I did not. All Mycene's earth and air,
Her cities and her tops, are new to me.

Mer. What! was he arm'd this young assaulter? Came he
With malice or for robbery? Be of comfort:
If he attack'd thee thy defence was necessary,
And sad necessity makes all things just.

Eum. Heav'n is my witness I provok'd him not:
'Tis not in valour's wish to offer insult,
And sure it is no crime to check it offer'd.

Mer. On then—relate the chance that led thee hither.

Eum. Entering your borders I beheld a temple
Sacred to Hercules, the god my soul,
Low as my lot was cast, aspires to honour.
—What should I do, bare vot'ry as I was?
I had no off'rings, brought no victims with me.
Poor and oppress'd by Fortune what I cou'd
I gave—I knelt, and pour'd a heart before him
Warm as a hundred hecatombs! pure, humble,
Pious, and firm—Th' unhappy can no more.
I ask'd not for myself his undue blessing,
I pray'd protection to his own high race,
For I had heard, great Queen! your wrongs requir'd it.
The present god, methought, receiv'd my pray'r;
His altar trembled, and his temple rung,

Keen undulating glories beam'd about me:
 I know not how I bore it—but my heart,
 Full of the force infus'd, at once grew vaster;
 My swelling courage far above myself
 Sustain'd me—and I glow'd with all the god.

Mer. rising in emotion.] Go on, methinks the god thou
 nam'st speaks in thee,

And ev'ry hearer glows, as warm'd as thou!

Eum. I bow'd, and left the temple—Following came
 Two men of haughty stride, with angry low'r:
 Roughly accosting they reproach'd my pray'r:
 How did I dare, they ask'd, solicit Heav'n
 To aid sedition's purposes? No god
 Should save a wretch like me, proscrib'd by pow'r.
 —I heard astonish'd, and prepar'd to speak,
 When with impatient fierceness each rais'd arm
 With rage conjoin'd came on.

Mer. interrupting.] Both!—Came they
 To wound thee?—

Eum. Both with madman's frenzy
 Struck at my breast ignobly.

Mer. Thou hast eas'd me.
 Go on—These men had souls that match'd their fate.

Eum. Unarm'd and inoffensive, so surpris'd,
 The god I had address'd repaid my pray'r.
 —Warding the weakest stroke with swordless hand,
 Swiftly I clos'd, and seiz'd the wrested steel
 From him whose stronger arm more nearly press'd me;
 Seiz'd it with lightning's swiftness, for oppression
 Rouses distress to vengeance—On himself
 I turn'd his pointed weapon, sav'd my breast,
 And plung'd it in his own—He fell—the other
 Started, and curs'd, but like a coward fled,
 False to his dying fellow—Mighty Queen!
 This is the sad short truth: may the kind pow'r
 I bow'd to touch your ear and move your pity!

Mer. She were a tigress that cou'd hear this tale
 And pause upon thy pardon—Still go on.
 How wert thou seiz'd? hide nothing, and hope all.

Eum. Shock'd by uncertain dread for what was done
 I gaz'd astonish'd round, and mark'd beneath
 Where at a furlong's distance the salt wave

Broke on the shore. Sudden I snatch'd the corpse,
And hast'ning to the beach gave it to the sea:
That done I sigh'd and fled. Your guards, great Queen!
For what escapes such eyes as Heav'n's and your's!
Unseen by me mark'd all, follow'd, and took me.

Mer. to Euricles.] Did he resist when seiz'd?

Eum. I cou'd not Madam;
The name of Merope disarm'd my will.
They told me they were your's; I bow'd and yielded,
Gave 'em my new-gain'd sword, and took their chains.

Eur. This youth by him he kill'd was judg'd another.

Mer. Oh I have noted all, and Heav'n was just.
—Retire to farther distance gentle youth!—

I'll tell thee, Euricles,
Methought at ev'ry word this wand'rer spoke
Pity—or something tenderer than pity,
Clung to my tender heartstrings; nay, 'twas stranger!
For I will tell thee all—Cresphontes' features,
“Heav'n's! what ideas hopes and fears can raise!”
My dear dead manly lord's resembled features;
I saw and trac'd, (I blush to think what folly!)
Trac'd—in this cottage hero's honest face.

Ism. Compassion is a kind and generous painter;
—Yet Truth herself must grow as blind as Fortune
Ere she cou'd look on that unhappy youth
And find him less than worth her kindest pity.

Eur. Ismene speaks my thoughts; he's innocent;
The gods have stamp'd their mark of candour on him,
And no impostor's art inhabits there. [of Greece

Mer. to Eumenes.] Again approach me—In what part
Did it please Heav'n to give thee birth good youth?

Eum. advancing.] In Elis, generous Queen!

Mer. In Elis—Tell me,
I hop'd it had been nearer—hast thou ever
In thy low converse heard the swains thy neighbours
Mention the name of Narbas—or Eumenes?
—The last thou must have heard of.

Eum. Never Madam.

Mer. Never?—that's strange! What then was thy con-
What thy employment, and thy father's name? [dition,

Eum. My father was a shepherd learn'd and wise;
Prince of the sylvan shades and past'ral vale

He led th' attracted hearts of list'ning swains
And pleas'd 'em into subjects—in himself
Too humble for distinction—had not virtue
Compell'd him into notice——

He liv'd unenvy'd; for excelling all
He veil'd superiour eminence by modesty;
No claim'd exemption eas'd his life from care;
Peacefully poor, and rev'rently belov'd,
His fleecy harvests fed him, and his name
Was Policletes, Madam.

Mer. What thy own?

Eum. Low, like my past'ral care—to cottage cars
Adapted—and unform'd for your regard,
—Yet Elis oft' may deign to speak of—Dorilas.

Mer. Oh, I have lost my hope: Heav'n mocks relief,
And ev'ry starting spark is quench'd in darkness.
So then your parents held no rank in Greece?

Eum. Did rank draw claim from goodness they have rights:
Wou'd leave all place behind 'em: "inborn virtue
"Can borrow no enlargement, but lends all.
"That keeps contempt from titles."

Mer. Ev'ry word

He utters has a charm?——But why at home
So bless'd, and to such parents doubly dear,
Didst thou, forgetful of the care thou owed'st 'em,
Quit their kind cot and leave 'em to their tears?

Eum. A vain desire of glory first seduc'd me.
Oft' have I heard my father mourn Mycene,
Weep for her civil wars and suff'ring queen;
Oft' had he charm'd my young aspiring soul
With wonder at your firmness—So inflam'd
I learnt by slow degrees to think my youth
Disgrac'd by homely virtues, weigh'd the call
Of glory against duty, and grew bold
To hope my humble arm might add some aid
To prop your warring standards—See, great Queen!
The only motive of my erring rashness;
For Heav'n has taught me tho' it loves your cause
I merit my distress, who left my father,
Wanting perhaps in age's feeble calls
Some help I might have lent him—'Twas a fault;
But 'twas my first, and I may live to mend it. [Aside.

Mer. Methinks I hear Eumenes—So my soul
Informs me had he known descent thus lowly
So my Eumenes wou'd have thought and spoke.
—Such is his age where'er conceal'd he mourns,
Perhaps too such his fortune—driv'n like this
From realm to realm, a wand'rer thus unknown!
Friendless and hopeless, and expos'd to poverty!
—I will have pity on this youth's distress,
And cultivate his fortune—What bold noise?

[*Shouts heard without*

Whence can such rudeness flow!—What is't Ismene?

Ism. at a window.] All ills are Polyphontes. The vile
Shout, their sure vote for treason. Polyphontes [rabble
Is king proclaim'd—and hope is now no more. [me!

Eum. Oh for the sword once more your guards took from
Now, now I feel these chains; now first they bind me.

Mer. Give him his sword, let him be free as air.
Honest proposer!—but thy help's too weak
To prop a throne in danger—

Eum. Oh Queen!—forgive presumption in the poor,
When they dare pity greatness.

All have their mis'ries—but when crowns grow wretched
'Tis arrogance in mean ones to complain. [*Exit Eumenes.*

Eur. Too fatally I prophesy'd—Confess
This hard necessity which now you find,
And seem at least to sooth the tyrant's hope.

Mer. I misconceiv'd the gods: I durst not dream
They cou'd have bid guilt thrive and giv'n up virtue.

Eur. They will not Madam.

Mer. So my sad heart still
Struggles to hope, and if they mark my wo
They will forgive my rashness.

Eur. Come what must
I will assemble round you the few faithful,
And failing to protect partake your fall. [*Exit Euricles.*

Mer. Oh, people! people! they who trust your faith
Bid the wild winds blow constant.

Ism. The people's voice is call'd the voice of gods.

Mer. What villain baseness wants some bold pretence
That drags in Heav'n to grace it! thefts, plots, perjuries,
Avarice, revenge, the bloody zeal of pride,

And unforgiving bitterness of heart,
All—have their gods to friend, their priests to sanctify.

Enter EURICLES with a sword.

Eur. Sorrow on sorrows bear down hope's last prop.
Now be a queen indeed!—arm your great heart
With preparation to its utmost stretch,
For if it stands this shock its pow'r's immortal.

Mer. No—I am sinking from all sense of pain,
And shall grow safe by want of strength to suffer.
Speak—there is now but one sad truth to dread,
And my soul waits it heard—then rests for ever.

Eur. It has pleas'd Heav'n—this sword! this fatal sword.

Mer. I understand thee; thou wouldst say he's dead.

Eur. Oh! 't is too surely so; th' atrocious crime
At last succeeded—and all care is vain.

Mer. Gods! gods—'t is done—now all your bolts have
struck me.

Ism. Guard her distracted brain!

Eur. Save her kind Heav'n!

Mer. What have I done? where have I been?

Eur. Alas! where grief too oft'
Has left th' unhappy—Recollect.

Mer. Oh Euricles! I recollect too much:
Trust my sustaining heart it breaks not yet.
Comfort's brief clouds methought came shadowing o'er
But I am found again, a wretch so friendless [me;
That Madness will not lend relief but shuns me.

Eur. Perish that young that impious hypocrite!
That ill-admir'd attractor of your pity,
Whom your protection spar'd for fancy'd virtue!

Mer. Who?—what?—

Ism. Not Dorilas?

Eur. Him, him—that Dorilas.

Mer. Monster! beyond all credit of deceit!

Ism. He!—'t is impossible.

Eur. He was the murderer;

I bring too clear a proof. Passing but now
I found him waiting, freed him from his chains,
And to rearm him for the cause he chose
Call'd for his sword—which as he stretch'd his hand
To take I mark'd, and trembled at the view.
These once-known gems—too well remember'd here.

Mer. taking the sword.] Oh, all ye sleeping gods! 'twas
my Cresphontes';
'Twas the king's sword. Narbas, beyond all doubting,
Sav'd it that dreadful night for my Eumenes.
Oh, what a false vile tale this flatterer form'd
To cheat us into pardon!
Take the dumb dreadful witness from my fight.

[Giving Euricles the sword.

Yet stay—return it me— *[Resumes the sword, and kneels.*
I thank ye, gods!

Thank your inspiring justice, and accept it;
Live but to thank you for this dire due sacrifice,
Which from the childless mother's widow'd hand
Your heav'n-directed vengeance well demands. *[She rises.*
Yes, I will sheathe it on my husband's tomb
Deep in the bleeding murd'rer's panting heart,
“Then scorning Polyphontes pierce my own,”
So die reveng'd and safe—absolving Heav'n.
—Go, Euricles—

Eur. Not so—Yet bear his fight,
That from his own dire mouth we may compel
Discovery of his guilt's commission'd cause,
And to the bottom search this fatal tale. *[Exit Euricles.*

Ism. Erox!—the tyrant's minister of death.

Enter EROX.

Erox aside.] “Nowaid me, wily pow'r's of winning art!”

Mer. How now! what bold intrusion plac'd thee here?

Erox. Queen of the kingdom's lord, his heart's high
Suffer a voice unequal to the task *[compress!*
To wrong th' intrusted sense of his told grief
Who sends me to condole you—Polyphontes,
Had you but smooth'd that brow's majestic bend,
I meant to 'ave said the king—this moment heard
The fate most pity'd of the prince your son,
Heard, and takes equal part in all your wrongs.

Mer. More than his part he takes in what is mine,
Else had he never dar'd aspire to seize
His master's throne, nor name my murder'd son.

Erox. Wishing he waits but leave. Respect is delicate,
And would not unadmitted now approach.
Fain would he talk of comfort to your sorrows,
Who weeping wants the pow'r to curb his own.

Mer. What would your artful sender come to say?

Erox. To beg that to his hand you wou'd commit
This hateful murd'rer's punishment—He glows
For vengeance in your cause; shou'd think, his claim
Unworthy a crown's trust, less worthy your's,
Cou'd he forget that justice props a throne.

Mer. No, tell him no; my hand revenges here;
Too short of reach Heav'n knows! but what it can
It shall, and neither asks nor bears his aid.

Erox. The king too tenderly regards your will
To cross it ev'n in anger—less in reason.
—I humbly take my leave.

Mer. "I grant it gladly."

[*Exit Erox.*]

Hunted on ev'ry side, why waits distress
Till still new growths of anguish more oppress?
How poor a thing is life dragg'd on to age,
To stand the pity'd mark of Fortune's rage!
Death shuts out mis'ry, and can best restrain
The bite of insult and the goad of pain.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE, *the tomb of Cresphontes.*

NARBAS alone.

HAIL, venerable scene! hail, sacred shade!
Hail, sad-fought manes of my long-lov'd lord!
My eyes' last object on Mycenian earth.
Was thy dear life and empire lost in blood,
Now late returning, their first mourning search
Finds in this cold still tomb the whole shrunk reach
Of thy contracted reign; yet here, ev'n here,
Were thy Eumenes render'd back, ev'n here
Narbas had held some hope to sooth thy ghost.
How shall I meet his mother's mournful eye,
Who bring new weight to woes o'ercharg'd before!
From ev'ry-madd'ning street I hear loud shouts;
Those execrable bawds to flatter'd pow'r
Proclaim the traitor Polyphontes king,
He who from clime to clime track'd our sad way,
Held like a hunted dear his prince in chase,

Hot in pursuit for murder!—Each known prospect,
Each point, each outlet, of this neighb'ring palace
Brings to afflicted mem'ry some new stroke
Of sorrow fresh to pain—tho' fifteen winters
Have snow'd their whiteness on me since they fell!
Wou'd I cou'd find the face of some old friend!
But what court friendship's life lasts fifteen winters?
Soft—whom has Heav'n sent here? if Innocence
Dwells yet on earth such looks as these must house it.

[Starts as Ismene comes nearer.

Bless the resembled mother's copy'd softness!
'Tis my Ismene, 'tis my own dear daughter!
Time cannot hide her from a parent's eye,
Child as she was—and chang'd since last I saw her.
*Enter ISMENE, followed by a train of virgins in white, who
bring baskets, and strew flowers on the tomb.*

Ism. Who is this bold unknown, so sagely form'd,
Yet indiscreetly rude—at such an hour
To break abruptly on the Queen's sad purpose?

Nar. Fairest of forms——

Ism. Who are you?

Nar. Chide me not,

Sweet picture of the pow'r's who shed soft pity!
—I am a nameless, friendless, weak, old man:
Once I was a servant to the Queen you serve;
Oh, grant the gracious privilege to see her!

Ism. Rev'rend and wise; the first I see you are,
The last my heart conceives you—what a time
Have your misguided wants unaptly chosen!
Your sight wou'd now offend her—deep distress,
From dire solemnity of purpose, brings her:
'Twere prudent to withdraw.

Nar. in a low voice.] Come near Ismene.

Ism. Immortal pow'rs! who can it be?—he knows me!
Fain wou'd I dare mix hope with fear and wonder.

[Approaching him.

Nar. Thou art my child. Kind Heav'n has sent thee
—Be cautious, and observe. [to me.

Ism. kneeling.] Prophetick heart.

Oh Sir—I cannot speak!

Nar. raising her.] Hide thy surprise,

Ere yet some dang'rous note detects our meeting.

—Soft as thy eyes, Ismene, be thy voice,
And answer to my question—Round this tomb
Why thus assembled moves that virgin train?

Ism. Alas! the afflicted Queen
Distracted comes—to offer on this tomb
Her life's last sacrifice—a dreadful victim!
—The murd'rer of her son.

Nar. Eumenes dead!

Ism. Alas! Sir, cou'd you be a stranger to it?

Nar. Blast of my soul's best hope—Who dar'd this vil-

Ism. A youth who found him in Alcides' temple; [lany?
One from whose air of manly modesty
None surely cou'd have fear'd—Behold he comes:
That fetter'd criminal is he—Oh Sir!
Where will ye now be hid?

Nar. In death, Ismene,

If I now hear and see, and am not dreaming.

Ism. From the Queen's eye I dare no longer—

Nar. Stay:

Queens, kings, nor gods, shall tear thee from my arm
Till thou hast heard me fully.

*Solemn procession to a dead march; MEROPE, EURICLES, with
the sword; EUMENES in chains; Guards, Priests, as to sa-
crifice—The Queen goes up weeping, and kneels silent at the
tomb, while the rest range themselves on each side of the scene.*

Nar. to Ism.] "Some black-soul'd fiend, some Fury ris'n
"from hell,

"Has darken'd all discernment—Called'st thou not

"That fetter'd youth the murd'rer of Eumenes?

Ism. "I call'd him so too truly.

Nar. "He is Eumenes!

"What angry god misleads the Queen to madness?

"She dreams Eumenes kill'd—and kills Eumenes!

Ism. "Now are my heart's late tremblings well explain'd.

"Quick let me rush and warn her erring hand.

Nar. "Not for a thousand worlds—to save him so

"Were but to lose him surer—Polyphontes

"Has ears and eyes too near us—

"I may anon find means, when all are busy'd,

"To hide myself unmark'd amidst the crowd."

Sad and solemn musick, then a song of sacrifice by the chief Priest.

Hear from the dark and silent shade,
Hear ye pale bands of death;
Gliding from graves where once your bones were laid
Receive a murd'rer's breath.

Chorus of priests and virgins.

Receive a murd'rer's breath.

Mer. rising and coming forward.] Where is this victim—
odious to all pow'rs,
But one—the dreadful Nemesis?

[The guards bring up Eumenes.]

Eur. Yet ere he dies
'Twere fit some force of torture should compel him
To name his vile accomplices.

Mer. It shall.

Say, monster! what provok'd thee to this guilt,
And what associates join'd thee?

Eum. I appeal

The gods, who find it fit my soul should buy
At this dear rate the moment's hope you lent it
Those gods can witness for me, they who curse
The perjurd, and disclaim the base one's safety:
My lips detest imposture;
—Nor know I by what change in Heav'n's high will
I, who of late so blest'd had touch'd your pity,
Fall now beneath your anger.

Mer. View this sword. *[Taking the sword from Euricles.]*
Know you the dreadful object?

Eum. 'Twas the villain's
My just hand punish'd with it.

Mer. Seize him, rend him,
Swift to the destin'd altar drag the traitor:
He owns it, glories in his bloody crime,
And my shock'd soul akes at him. *[The guards seize him.]*

Eum. Off——away—— *[Struggling.]*
Spare your officious grasp——I will be heard
One last loud word——in spite of arms and insult.

Mer. after a signal to the guards, who quit Eumenes.] Thou
then who deal'st in death canst find death fearful.

Eum. No, Madam, you mistake: death shakes the happy;
But he who is a wretch receives him gladly.
—Yet 'gainst imputed guilt the humblest wrong'd
Rise bold in innocence.

—Tell me, nor let your pride deface your pity,
Whose so high-rated blood was this I shed?

—If he was dear to you curs'd be my memory
Or I had rather lost my own than his!

Mer. Where has this cruel wretch been taught deceit?
Why was that look, so like Cresphontes, his! [*Half fainting.*]

Eur. Great Queen! sustain your purpose; think of vengeance,
The laws of nature, and the lives of kings. [*geance,*

Eum. Do laws and kings then call injustice vengeance?
Shame on the great! Why long'd my eyes for courts?

“Courts! where the pride of guilt lays claim to honour!

“—Haughty of heart why have they souls thus abject?

“They threaten, praise, fright, flatter, and insult me!

“—Yet, oh! 'twas just.”—I left my father rashly,
Felt not the pangs, weigh'd not the tears, I cost him.

Fate drew me from my forest's guiltless quiet,

Deaf to the warnings of a father's wisdom

And a griev'd mother's bodings.

Mer. Mother, said he!

Barbarian! hast thou yet a mother left thee?

I was a mother too——till thy fell hand

Depriv'd me of a son and all life's comforts.

Eum. A son!——your son!

Mer. Mine, monster! murd'rer! mine.

Eum. “If such was my misfortune, such my curse,”
If Heav'n has made it possible——that he

Who in a fatal moment err'd—and fell

By my ill-destin'd rashness, was your son,

Earth holds not such another wretch as I am,

And mercy's faintest glimpse shou'd shun to reach me——

Mer. Mercy! thou hypocrite——If thou dar'st pray,
Raise thy dumb hands, and ask in vain from Heav'n
The mercy thou deny'dst my dying son.

Eum. Yet hear——

Mer. Stop his detested mouth,
Force the doom'd victim to the altar's foot,
Veil him from light, no more to be beheld;
Hide his quench'd eyes for ever.

[*Two Priests approaching with a veil, he snatches it, and
throws it from him.*]

Eum. Off, ye vain forms!
Cover the eyes of cowards, mine disdain ye:

Mine can with stedfast and advancing scorn
Look in Death's face full-fighted—When it comes
'Tis to be met not hid—

Welcome eternal day, bad world farewell.

[*Advances between the Priests to the tomb, followed by the Queen, Euricles, Ismene, &c.*

Mer. at the tomb with the sword drawn, and Eumenes kneeling ready.] Shade of my murder'd husband—hear

Chorus of fingers' voices.] Oh hear! [my call.

Mer. Soul of my bleeding son, hear thou!

Chorus of fingers' voices.] Oh hear!

Mer. Unexpiated souls—if in those glooms
Where walk the fullen ghosts of earth-wrong'd kings
You hear Atonement's voice, and wait redress,
Rise from your dire domains.

Chorus of fingers' voices.] Oh rise!

Mer. Thou last

Tremendous pow'r, pale goddess, present still!
To direful vengeance nerve this list'd arm,
And thus assisting——

[*Ismene preventing the blow, Narbas breaks into fight, and cries out loudly.*

Nar. Stay, stay that bloody purpose;
Death has already been too busy here,
And Heav'n disclaims such sacrifice.

Mer. in a frighted and trembling attitude.] Who art thou?

Eur. Oh, 't is Narbas!

Cautious conceal this chance, or ruin finds him.

Ism. aside to the Queen.] Your victim is your son—the
prince Eumenes.

[*Merope lets fall the sword, astonish'd and trembling.*

Eum. raising himself to look round.] I heard a wellknown
voice, now heard no longer.

Open, sad eyes, once more from the grave's brink,
And find what seem'd——Oh! 't is—it is—my father!

Nar. aside to Eum.] Hear, and be mute. Thy fate, un-
Depends upon thy silence. [wary youth,

Eum. Whence, oh ye Pow'rs!

Can all these myst'ries rise?

Mer. Oh, 't is too much!

And life and I are lost. [*Faints, and is supported by Ismene.*

The murd'rous stripling thro' the grief he brought you
Pity disdains his cause, and Fate demands him.

Mer. I find myself, 't is true, too weak for vengeance :
Would I had pow'r more equal to my wrongs!

Pol. Leave it to me; 't is a king's right; I claim it.

Mer. I shall consider of it.

Pol. Why? what doubt you?

Slackens your anger that your vengeance hesitates?
Is your son's mem'ry now less dear than lately? [derer—

Mer. Perish the will that wrongs him! but this mur-
This youth—They tell me you suspect accomplices—
Were it not prudent to suspend his fate
Till he declares who join'd him?

Pol. What expect you
To clear besides your son's known fall?

Mer. His father's—
That was a cup of gall—Oh, conscious guilt,
How dumb thy voice unlook'd-for strikes the bold!

[*Aside.*

Pol. after a pause.] Well—ev'n of that too we ourself
will ask him.

Mer. You are too busy, Sir, in a pursuit
That least admits your quick'ning.

Pol. Strange perplexity!
That what most seeks your ease should most offend?
But spring it whence it may the cause remov'd
There ends the doubt and pain—This wretch shall die.

[*Going.*

Mer. Barbarian! horrible, inhuman!—Sir,
Why have you sought to startle me—I fear'd
You meant to snatch my victim from my vengeance.

Pol. But—shall he really die!

Mer. Die! who—he die?

Pol. This murd'rer of your son.

Mer. I go this moment,
And will alone examine him.

Pol. Stay Madam.

This new embarrassment of mingled pains,
This tenderness in rage, these hopes, fears, startings,
This art to colour some illhid distress,
That casts confusion o'er your troubled soul,
Half sentences broke short, looks fill'd with horror,

Are Nature's thin disguise to cover danger :
 Something you will not tell alarms my caution,
 And bids my summon'd fear take place of love.
 In ent'ring here I had a glimpse but now
 Of an old man who seem'd to shun my presence :
 Why is he fled? who was he?

Mer. Scarce yet call'd

A king—and see, already fill'd with jealousies!

Pol. Be kind and bear your part then---burthens shar'd
 Press light the eas'd sustainers. Come, your hand.

Mer. A moment since you talk'd but of revenge,
 Now 't is again all love—Away, keep separate
 Two passions nature never yet saw join'd.

Pol. Let it be so then; death shall straight remove
 That obstacle, and one wish remains:
 Follow at leisure you while I prepare.

[*Exeunt Polyphontes, Erox, and train.*]

Mer. Aft for me now, and save me, great Alcides!
 To pow'r like thine all things are possible,
 And grief oppress'd on earth finds friends in heav'n :
 Then when the wo-sunk heart is tir'd with care,
 And ev'ry human prospect bids despair,
 Break but one gleam of heav'nly comfort in
 And a new race of triumphs thence begin.

[*Exit with Attendants.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE, *the castle of Polyphontes.*

Enter POLYPHONTES and EROX.

POLYPHONTES.

SHE has her views, I mine—I should have fear'd
 Some hint's officious reach had touch'd her ear;
 I should have dreamt her eyes had catch'd some glance
 To guide discov'ry down the dark abyss
 Where my close crime lies veil'd in dumb obscurity,
 But that I know she is a woman, Erox,
 And born to be capricious.

Erox. Pride not distaste.
 Holds out her heart against you.

Pol. Let her keep it;
 My hope is humbler Erox; 'tis her hand
 I seek: hearts are girls' gifts to schoolboy lovers.
 Now let her spleen start wild; when time serves aptly
 Means shall be found to curb it——Thou art come
 From sounding this fierce captive son of wonder;
 What have thy thoughts concluded?

Erox. 'Tis not he;
 No race of Hercules need there alarm you:
 This but some rural brave of simple nurture,
 Void of ambition's flame; bold, blunt, and honest,
 Fearless of menace, tasteless of reward,
 And wanting ev'n the wish to dare for pow'r.
 He cannot be Eumenes.

Pol. Who then is he?

Erox. He says he is a shepherd's son; what more
 He will not be provok'd nor brib'd to tell.
 Firm without fierceness, without weakness gentle,
 Open as daylight, yet as dumb as death:
 Spite of my prejudice he forc'd my praise,
 And hatred must admire him.

Pol. Praise him on.

Be what or whom he may 'tis fit he die.
 The people, who conclude his punishment
 Inflicted for Eumenes' fancy'd murder,
 Will dream that race extinct, and cleave to me;
 So danger comes less near, nor shakes my throne.
 What hast thou learn'd of that conceal'd presumer
 Who, when the arm of Merope was rais'd,
 Refrain'd it with some pow'r that touch'd her soul?

Erox. The young man call'd him father. Chance, it seems,
 In that nice moment brought him to his view:
 He mov'd the Queen's compassion for his son,
 Fled like a wanton from the good man's care,
 Who in his search came sorrowing on from Elis.

Pol. I cannot trust this tale: thou grow'st too credulous.
 Mysterious caution hangs too thick a veil
 O'er all their late proceedings. That old man
 Left the Queen's presence starting at my entrance.
 Why was he hid if a young rustick's father?
 Why should my coming fright him? He has heard
 Since then his son's redoubled danger dwells

But in my menace; yet he comes not near me.

I had ere now beheld him at my feet

Had his heart trembled with a father's terrors.

Erox. See, Sir, he's free; and mark, the Queen, how

Pol. I note it, and determine. [near—

Now, my sister—

Enter MEROPE, ISMENE, EURICLES, EUMENES, and Guards.

Mer. You see, Sir, I dare know and use my rights.

How had your will presum'd to seize my victim?

Am I but Queen of shadows, that my vengeance

Must move as you direct it?

Pol. Nobly urg'd!

The victim is your right, requires your hand;

Mine had defac'd your vengeance—I assum'd

Pretence to aid it but to fire your languor.

Take courage; I resign him; with his blood

Wash this reluctant faintness from your heart,

And give it warmth to meet me at the altar.

Mer. Horrid and impious hope!

Pol. Looks Love so frightful?

Eum. to Pol.] Who taught thee to associate love with
What right has Cupid to a captive's blood? [cruelty?

Yet mispresume not that I court thy pity;

He has too poor a view from life to prize it

Whose death can only serve to shorten pain.

But I am told thou call'st thyself a king;

Know if thou art one that the poor have rights,

And pow'r in all its pride is less than justice.

I am a stranger, innocent and friendless,

And that protection which thou ow'st to all

Is doubly due to me—for I'm unhappy.

Pol. Protection is for worth; guilt calls for vengeance.

Eum. And what does wrong's licentious insult call for?

In my own just defence I kill'd a robber;

Law call'd it murder, and the Queen condemn'd me:

"Queens may mistake; ev'n gods who love grow partial."

I can forgive th' injustice of a mother,

And could have bless'd her hand beneath the blow:

"Nature has weaknesses that err to virtue:"

But what hast thou to do with mothers' vengeance?

Law that shocks equity is reason's murder.

Pol. So young, so wretched, and so arrogant !
Methinks the pride of an Alcides' blood
Could scarce have swell'd a soul to loftier boldness.

Mer. Pity presumptuous heat ; 't is youth's prerogative.

Pol. Mean while, how happy such unpolish'd plainness
To move defence from art so skill'd as your's !
Your son sure lives.

Mer. Lives ! and shall live : I trust him to the gods :
They can, they did, they will, protect him.

Pol. What cannot woman's pity ? None who marks
The willing pardon your soft looks ensure him
Can charge your heart with cruelty.

Mer. My looks
Perhaps hint meanings prudence should decline
To lend too loud a tongue to—but there are
Whose heart speaks nothing, yet tells all my actions.

Pol. Mark if I speak not now my heart's true language.
Traitor, receive thy doom—— [*Drawing his sword.*

Mer. interposing.] Strike here, here, murd'rer !
Menace my breast, not his.

Pol. Whose heart speaks now ?

Eum. Now, ye immortals ! not to die were not
To triumph——To be pity'd here, so pity'd,
By such a queen as Merope !——'Tis glory
That ev'ry pow'r beneath a god might envy !

Pol. If you would have him live confess, who is he ?

Mer. He is——

Eur. to Ism.] " Oh ! we are lost !

Ism. " All, all is hopeless."

Pol. If he has right in you be swift to own him,
Or lose him by your silence. [*Offers to kill Eumenes.*

Mer. Stay—he is——

Pol. Who ? what ?—Say quickly——

Mer. He is my son Eumenes.

Pol. starting and aside.] 'Tis as I fear'd, and all my schemes
are air. [*Stands pensively fix'd.*

Eum. Heav'ns—did I hear that rightly ?

Mer. embracing him.] Thou art, my son :
Loud in the face of men and ears of gods
Cresphontes was thy father : I attest it,
I tell it to the winds, proclaim it, boast it !—
Hear it, thou soul of murder—I have found him,
And if I lose him now whole Heav'n shall curse thee.

Eum. I cannot comprehend it—yet I kneel
To thank you but for deigning to deceive me :
“Bless’d is his fate who dies in such a dream !”

Mer. One way thou art deceiv’d—the mother’s love
Forgets the monarch’s danger—Polyphontes—

Pol. starting.] Go on—I meditated—but speak Madam.

Mer. Thou now hast wrung from my affrighted heart
The secret that oppress’d it. Thou behold’st
Thy king distress’d before thee---Sigh if thou canst,
Sigh for the son, prince, mother, fame, and nature.

Pol. How to resolve will ask some needful pause---
Mean-while it shakes my faith to trust your story :
You hear the young man’s honestly disclaims
This greatness you would lend him.

Eum. Modest sense
Of my unequal worth compell’d some doubting,
But now ’t is truth contestless. Royal tears
Flow not for pity’d falsehood, and they prove it.

Mer. Tears touch not hearts of flint, and I will spare ’em.
Did your pride [*Kneels.*] hear me---for your pity cannot,
See me an humble suppliant at your feet,
Now first confessing I can fear your anger :
This should beyond all proof of tears convince you
That Merope’s his mother---Still you frown :
I forget

My own long sorrows, all my wrongs and insults,
Smile to the future, and absolve the past---
Let him but breathe---to reign were to be wretched.
Cruel ! you answer nothing---Look less dreadful---
Ease my distracted soul, and speak some comfort.

Eum. Oh Madam ! quit that posture--My proud heart
Aspires to keep the glory you have lent it.
If I indeed was born to call you mother,
Why do I see and hear you not a queen ? [*Raises her.*]
Nor think my soul too haughty---No distress
Absolves dejection : ’t is the brave’s prerogative
To feel without complaining.

“Now—strike, tyrant—

“Courage restrain’d from act takes pride to suffer.”

Pol. to Merope.] ’Tis well. I have with just attention
And in impartial silence weigh’d it all. [*heard,*]
Your sorrow claims some right to call for mine,

And his high spirit charms me. I take him

[*Takes Eumenes by the hand.*

Into my heedful care, remit his sentence,
And if found your's adopt him as my son.

Eum. Your's! said you?—your's!

Mer. Be patient, good Eumenes.

Pol. You know his destiny, you know what price
I rate his life at: smile and meet my wishes;
For may the gods conjointly curse my reign
If he survives refusal of my pray'r!
Bethink you. In an hour I shall expect you,
Where at the altar to th' attesting pow'rs
You may proclaim your choice. That moment makes him
My victim or my son. Till then farewell.

Mer. You cannot be so cruel—Leave him with me:
To see him might persuade me.

Pol. See him there,

See him in Hymen's Temple. Erox attend him. [*Exit Poly.*

Eum. Oh Queen! oh mother!

If I already dare assume a right
To call you by that dear that awful name,
Think nothing that may misbecome your glory,
Do nothing that may mix contempt with mine.
I leave you to the care of Heav'n and die.

Lead me to the tyrant. [*Exeunt Eum. and Erox.*

Mer. Fly, follow, Euricles; hold thy kind eye
Fix'd to this tyrant's motions: fain would I dream
He threatens but to fright me.

Eur. "Willing hope

"So flatters to deceive you: too, too sure

"His purpose: ev'n by nature stern and bloody,

"How more when pow'r and safety prompt his cruelty?"

[*Exit Euricles.*

Mer. Find thy good father, haste, Ismene, call him;
Tell him distress grows headstrong, and my soul
Sickens for want of counsel.

Ism. aside.] "What a blindness

"Is thirst of human grandeur! give me, gods!

"A cottage and concealment. Save the Queen,

"And from the curse of courts remotely place me."

[*Exit Ism.*

Mer. alone.] No, there is none, no ruler of the stars
Regardful of my miseries——

Oh my beloved son! my eyes have lost thee ever;
 "I shall no more snatch comfort from thy hopes,
 "Or wonder at thy sweetness."

Why have the deities permitted this?

Why have they sported with a mortal's mind,

Unpitying its distraction? sent him to me

From a far distant land—sent him, for what?

To glut the murd'rer's sword who kill'd his father.

Yet you are just, ye gods!—Amazing darkness

Dwells o'er the eternal will, and hides all cause.

I must not dare to tax almighty pow'r

For what I suffer from it. Let it but pay me

With that curs'd tyrant's punishment attain'd,

Let me but see myself depriv'd of him—

See him expell'd from light, from earth, from name,

Deep as the cheerless void below can plunge him, [sicc.

And I will kneel [*Kneeling.*] a wretch, and thank your ju-

Enter ISMENE and NARBAS.

Nar. Oh Queen! august in woes! what wrongs are your's!

Mer. rising.] Yes, Narbas, I have sacrific'd my son—

Have giv'n him up to death—have madly own'd him.

What mother who beheld her son as I did,

Doom'd and endanger'd, could have then kept silence?

Nar. Gen'rous purpose! gloriously you err'd,

And fell, but from a height 't was fame to reach.

Dry up your tears, and summon all your soul;

Time presses, and a moment lost is fate. [*Shouts heard.*

Ism. looking out.] Uproar and cries without, in rising

Heard from the city, reach the palace walls, [*wildness*

Sure sign of new confusion.

Nar. I saw the tyrant meet th' expecting Priests,

Attended not in Hymeneal robes,

But vestments such as sacrifice demands,

And pomp of bloody rites at dreadful altars:

To these his hand consign'd the victim led,

And deaf'ning shouts receiv'd him—From the train

Of priestly horrors this way mov'd their chiefs,

Follow'd by loud licentious bursts of joy,

Amid th' enormous swell of whose coarse roar

All I distinctly heard was Polyphontes.

Mer. Where are my guards arm'd for my vengeance?

Call 'em.

Enter three Priests.

What, are you here already?—Out of my sight
Ye sanctify'd deceits! you whose bold arts
Rule rulers, and compel ev'n kings to awe—
Begone, fly, vanish!——

Ye mouths of mercy and ye hands of blood!

Chief Pr. Sorrows and wrongs claim privilege to rail,
And Heav'n's affronted vot'ries must forgive.

Mer. Cool in your cruelty!—"Religion's veil
"Ill cloaks rebellion's license." Death was your errand;
Why talk you of forgiveness?—'tis not your's.

Chief Pr. Not in death's cause we come, but Heav'n's
If vows were plighted 'twixt the king and you [and love's.
No pow'r on earth dissolves 'em.

Mer. False as hell!

He knows I heard his hated vows with horror:
Slight insolence—To this illfounded charge
Silence and scorn shall answer. *[Turning away.]*

Chief Pr. Gracious Sov'reign,
Suspend your anger; 'tis unjustly rais'd;
Enlighten and command us. Found too easy
In one wrong'd faith we twice perhaps have err'd,
Alike deceiv'd in both—Unbend that brow,
And deign to teach our doubt what name to give
This stranger, this young captive, to the king.

Mer. Give him the name you dare to misapply,
Call him your King—my son—my lost Eumenes.

Chief Pr. Hear that, prophetick soul!—High Heav'n!
In dread this great discov'ry comes too late: [I tremble,
The shouting people crowd the waiting altar,
And erring in their zeal mishail the day.
What can be shall be try'd to cross his doom.

They shall be taught with bold advent'rous speed
To save their sov'reign's right---And hence, rash Queen,
Learn due repentance, and no more let loose
Therage of wrongs against the tongues of gods. *[Ex. Priests.]*

Mer. This solemn sharpness of deserv'd reproach
Struck my too conscious guilt with infelt awe:
I have been warm too soon and just too late.
What tho' Religion's guardians taint her tide,
Pure is the fountain tho' the stream flows wide:
Too oft' her erring guides her cause betray,
Yet rage grows impious when it bars her way. *Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE, a prison.

Enter EUMENES, NARBAS, and EURICLES.

EUMENES.

THINK, think upon your danger; fly, lov'd father!
Fly from the tyrant's pow'r, and leave me to my fate.

Nar. All sense of my own danger lost in your's
I threw myself regardless at his feet:
Full of the fatal subject I began,
Uncautious in my transport. Starting conscience
Fled from the face of truth. He shunn'd to hear,
Broke short, reply'd 't was well, gave me permission,
Nay, full of seeming zeal, enjoin'd my coming——
Bad me go pay my last short debt of counsel,
And try to bend your heart to meet his will.

Eur. He added that his Queen—he call'd her his—
I blush to name her such, but so he charg'd me:
Since, he said, in pity but for you
Yields a reluctant hand to close with his,
'Tis time, her son, whose life she holds so dear,
Aids his own int'rest and confirms her safety.
—The rest he paus'd and thought, but held it in,
Frown'd a disdainful nod, and bad us leave him.

Eum. Slowly awaking from my dream of wonders
I seem reborn to some new world unknown,
Where ev'ry thing I meet with shocks my soul.
—You talk of dying, whilst I yet half doubt
“Whether existing now I really live!”
If I am truly the lost wretch I seem,
If in Mycene now enclos'd I find
Queen Merope my mother---King Cresphontes
My father, murder'd---his fear'd murd'rer crown'd
With his stol'n diadem, and in it daring
Offer his widow'd Queen a hand stain'd frightful
her first husband's blood—All this to me
ms, while I drink in heav'n's fair light, and view
n' mansions of the gods, who govern man—
redible! astonishing!—and horrid!

D ij

Eur. 'Tis horrible indeed! too dark for thought!
—But reason's line wants depth to sound Heav'n's will.

Nar. Deign, my devoted prince! my king! my son!
Suffer me still to use that long-lov'd name—
Deign but to live---Time, chance, and fortune's changes,
May vindicate your glory---Since the tyrant
Tempt to betray reward him with his own:
Deceive deceivers and deceit grows virtue.

Eum. This in thy forests, Ehis! had I heard,
Ev'n there I shou'd have blush'd to hear from Narbat!
But as I am---No more-----
Kind was your motives!---Pitying my distress
You but forgot my duty.

Nar. Happy forests!
Wou'd ye were ours once more! there Peace dwelt with us,
There Safety slept upon unguarded hills,
And ev'ry tree's soft shadow cover'd Anguish.

Eur. "Soft! behold! the tyrant comes!"

Enter POLYPHONTES, speaking to the foregoing.

Pol. Retire, and wait without. [*Exeunt Eur. and Nar.*]

—And thou, rash youth!
Whose unexperienc'd years and gen'rous plainness
Fill me with all the pity due to weakness,
For the last time I come to bring thee pow'r.
Leave to my toil to smooth thy future paths,
And root out faction's thorns, which trouble empire.
—When I am dead, as age admits short stay,
Thou and my Merope will reign at ease,
And thank my painful cares, and love my memory.
—Why art thou dumb?---Pause on---I read thee rightly.
Thou hast, I know, a kind of stubborn pride
Call'd courage---and mistak'st it for a virtue:
—'Tis virtue when presumption drives it not,
But suffers thought to guide it.

Eum. Guiding thought
Has held me patient long—Now answer me,
Am I Mycene's monarch?

Pol. For thy birth,
Be it as truth, or trick, or chance, conclude it;
If from some low some nameless stock deriv'd,
Be humble and advis'd—and rise to greatness.
If happier offspring cast thee for a king

Make thyself worthy of the crown I mean thee.
 —'Tis but to wait me to the marriage altar,
 Where Love, and Merope, and Peace, attend:
 There to the gods and me (Mycene's guardians)
 Swear homage, and devote thy faithful sword.
 That done sports, joys, and safety, crown thy youth,
 And in thy riper years expect the diadem.

—Determine—

Eum. 'Tis determin'd.

Pol. Tell me how?

Eum. Why am I left unfree to chuse—yet press'd
 To tell thee my decision?---The compell'd
 To yield disgrace consent, and make faith doubtful.
 —I am a captive: he who holds not freedom
 Has not his will his own, and chuses nothing.

Pol. Fierce amid misery! thou at once art brave,
 And insolent, and wretched!--but beware,
 Nor trust too far my pity of thy poorness.
 I give thee yet some moments to resolve:
 I go before thee; but my guards attend
 To bring thee to the altar. Come determin'd
 To swear, and hope my crown and live my son,
 Or die a slave unown'd, and lose thy name. [*Is going.*]

Eum. calling after him.] Thou goest then?

Pol. stopping.] To expect thee.

Eum. I will come,

And with me (tremble to be told it) comes
 The god that rais'd my race to root out tyrants.
 Soon shall the throne thou stol'st no more be thine;
 Horror and penitence shall pale those eyes
 Whose daring insolence now frown on virtue;
 Menace and insult then shall quit thy voice,
 And groaning anguish grind it—What the gods
 Restrain my hand from reaching happier sons
 Of my immortal fire shall rise to execute,
 And hurl thee from a pow'r that hurts mankind.

Pol. Here Narbas! Euricles!——You may return.

Enter NARBAS and EURICLES.

Save him to your lessons. Too, too deeply
 He feels their past impression: teach him better,
 Your exacted heads shall answer to me
 For ev'ry wellknown help I owe your hatred.

—Narbas, thy age I think might best be trusted :
 Experience lays his dangers open to thee :
 Thou as thou lov'st advise him—Whether born
 The son of Merope or thine no matter.
 I must adopt him mine—or death demands him.

[Exit Polyphontes.]

Eum. Where did this illinstructed tyrant learn
 To threaten for persuasion?—I suspect
 He does not seem to doubt, but doubts indeed,
 I share no blood of Hercules—He's gone,
 And call'd me to his altar—Let us follow.

Nar. Stay—whither wou'd such fatal rashness lead you?

Eur. The Queen has friends, howe'er too weak, too few,
 Who dare defend her cause. Give us but time
 To weigh and to resolve, and these shall aid you.

Eum. No—in an hour so black so dire as this
 If I must fall I will—I go—to try.
 I task but my own heart and Heav'n to aid me.
 What god forsakes the friendless?

[Going out, meets Merope and Ismenus.]

Mer. Stay my son—
 Th' usurper sends me to thee—Rest unheard
 His errand; but my own requires thy ear.
 It has perhaps been told thee that the woman
 Conquers the queen.
 —Let no light credit of a guilt so shameful
 Insult the daughter, mother, wife—ah me!
 And widow—of a king—Yet I must go,
 Must at the altar lend my trembling hand,
 And seem—oh Heav'n!—

Eum. Oh Madam! so to seem
 Were so to be. Can solemn vows at altars
 Leave room for art's evasions? “See me sooner
 “Tinging the spotted stone with gushing blood,
 “And my torn breast th' unseemingly sacrifice.

Mer. “So look'd, so spoke—so sometimes frown'd,
 “Full of thy godlike father copy too [Cresphontes.
 “The confidence he lent me. He had scorn'd
 “To doubt me for a moment less than Merope.

Eum. “If I was guilty—think”——

Mer.——No more—Time presses;
 Hear my resolving will, and curb thy own.

Th' usurper of thy throne no sooner joins
My hand's suppos'd consent than at the altar
He swears in all the pomp of priestly witness
To free thee from thy chains—and from that hour
Confirm succession thine.——

Eum. Think at what price comes empire bought so dear!
Rather than see you wed this——

Mer. Rash again!——
Bound by an oath so witness'd by the gods
And all Mycene's priests—and all her peers—
He dares not break it, and thou liv'st to reign:
For me who have thenceforth no call for life
I seek thy father in the glooms below.

Eum.——No more.
—It shall not be—See, my repugnant soul
Shrinks from th' abhorr'd conception: the felt god,
The god glows in me, swells against control,
And ev'ry springy nerve is active fire!
Come on, friends! father! mother!—trust my firmness:
See if I bear a heart that brooks this wrong,
That poorly pants for a base hour of life---
And let a woman's blood outdare a king's. [Going.

Mer. Oh stay! return—call; stop him.

Eur. Sir!

Nar. Prince!

Mer. Son!

Eum. returning.] Look out; see yonder; view my father's tomb.

Know you his voice? are you a queen?

Come, listen——

I hear him---Hark! my king, my father, calls!

Mer. Methinks the god
He talk'd of swells indeed his wid'ning soul,
Lifts him above himself---above mankind.

Eum. Come---let me lead you to the altar's foot:
There hear, there see---there dwells th' Eternal's eye!

Mer. Ah, what is thy design!

Eum. To die---to live.

Friends!---in this warm embrace divide my soul.

[To Narbas, who presses him tenderly.

---Weep not my Narbas:

No blush for deeds unworthy your instructions

Shall stain remembrance of the care I cost you.
 Stay thou, that this good Lord returning from me
 May find thee, and impart a rip'ning hope.
 Whereon your council may direct and save.
 On to the work of fate---it calls me hence---

I hear it and obey. [*Exeunt Eum. Mer. and Eur.*]

Nar. Away---I wou'd not see thee share my sorrow.

Ism. Oh, 't were too poor a wish. Heav'n knows I seek
 No share---I long for pow'r to bear it all.

Nar. Thou art too good for courts---where ruin preys
 On innocence, and nought but guile is safe.
 ---What are thy thoughts of this lost prince's virtues?

Ism. I am unskill'd in men, and most in kings;
 But sure if ever beauty dwelt in form,
 Courage in gentleness, or truth in grandeur,
 All those adorn'd perfections meet in him.

Nar. Yet see how Heav'n, that gave him all these claims,
 Forgets 'em, and resigns him---Let that teach thee
 When soon, as soon they will, thy splendours fall,
 Thou lovest nothing but a right to woes.

Ism. Shou'd the Queen,
 Best of her sex,
 Leave this loud stage of pain, and rest in death,
 Oh, teach my willing feet to find some gloom
 Dark as my prospects, deep enclos'd for safety,
 And silent as the brow of midnight sleep!

Nar. Yes, we will go, my sweet Ismene! go
 Where Sorrow's sharpest eye shall fail to find us;
 Where we may mix with men who ne'er deceiv'd,
 And women born to be the charms they look.
 —There is a place, which my Eumenes lov'd
 Till youth's fond hope of glory dash'd his peace,
 Where nature, plainly noble, knows no pomp,
 And virtue moves no envy.

[*Shouts.*]

—Hark! that cry
 Bodes horror---'t is the signal of some fate.

—Listen: again—

[*Shouts.*]

Ism. Again I hear and tremble.
 Who knows but now the Queen's too direful deed
 Has ended all her mis'ries!—

Nar. No more these eyes shall find thee, fated king!
 Cresphontes and his race are all no more.

Ism. at a window.] Hence from the temple to the palace
The scatt'ring crowd runs wide a thousand ways, [gate
All busy'd without view—all driv'n by terrour.

Enter EURICLES bloody.

Nar. Breathless and bleeding, see! who comes!—oh
Euricles!

Eur. Scarce had I strength, wedg'd in by crossing crowds,
To stem yon' breathing torrent—Give me rest.

Nar. Eumenes—does he live?

Eur. He is—the son confess'd of Grecian gods.

Nar. What, has he suffer'd?

Eur. Nothing---but has done---

Beyond example's boast---Oh! such a deed!
So terrible! so just!--so fill'd with wonders!
That half Alcides' labours scarce were more.

Nar. And shall he be a king?

Eur. He is.

Nar. And Merope,
Great mirror of affliction—lives she too?

How was it?---say---my joys will grow too strong!

Eur. The altar, strew'd with flow'rs, was ready dress'd,
The smoking incense rose in fragrant curls,
And Hymen's lambent torches flam'd serene,
Silence and expectation's dreadful stillness
Doubled the solemn horror of the scene!

—There Polyphontes stood, and at his side,

Dumb as a destin'd victim, stood the Queen.

Our prince's summon'd hand had touch'd the altar,

His eye sought Heav'n, as if prepar'd to swear:

The tyrant smil'd---when straight the priest look'd pale,

The lights extinguish'd, and the temple's roof,

Shook by descending thunder, seem'd to bow!

The god! the god! the rev'rend starter cry'd,

Forbids these baneful nuptials---Yes, I hear him,

The dreadful prince reply'd; and at that word

Leapt from the altar to the tyrant's breast,

And plung'd the sacred axe of sacrifice,

Which, like a lightning's flash, and reach'd his life.

He fell---and o'er him while with pendent eye

The indignant hero hung with arm new-rais'd

From behind, pale Erox pierc'd his side.

Red in his mingled blood and rising anger

He heard the crowd's protective cry---turn'd short,
 And bury'd in his brow the rapid steel;
 Then to the altar's height sublimely sprung,
 Stood monarch allconfess'd, and wav'd the throng!
 Come, let me guide you to this work of Heav'n;
 Haste, and partake it-----fly-----

Nar. Oh, happy day-----

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE, the temple of Hymen.

EUMENES *discovered on the altar with the axe of sacrifice in his hand*; MEROPE *kneeling, Priests, Attendants, and Guards. Trumpets and shouts heard.*

Mer. Now, now, ye gods! my pray'rs are heard.

[*A loud clap of thunder.*]

Eum. Hark Madam, Heav'n approves! th' attentive gods
 Hear hearts, and make voice needfuls---“Doubt not then
 “They are the good mind's guardians---my deliverance
 “Proves how they lov'd your Virtue;” in your safety
 I feel the blessing perfect-----May I live
 In deeds, not words, to thank the good they gave.

Mer. Deeds, words, and thoughts, are theirs---
 Heav'n claims us all.

[*and with him*

Eum. *to the people.*] “Hear me, my people! take your king,
 “Heav'n's best gift, your liberty---Haughtier monarchs
 “Place greatness in oppression; let my throne
 “Find safety but in saving----
 “Pride is too apt to harden prosperous pow'r,
 “But he whose youth is chasten'd by distress
 “Makes subjects happy and himself ador'd.”

Enter NARBAS, EURICLES, and ISMENE, all speaking kneeling.
 Hail! and be ever blest'd, oh King! oh Queen!

Mer. Rise---and lament no more, ye happy friends
 Of virtue and of Heav'n-----see what the gods
 Have done---to shame suspicion into faith!
 Oh! never let the innocent despair:

The hand that made can save, and best knows when. [*To Eum.*
 -----Son of Alcides!-----for what heart but his,
 Nourish'd in misery, by wants obstructed,
 Ere sprung like thine at youth's first shoot to glory,
 Trod on a tyrant, and redeem'd a people?

Eum. 'Tis but the low, the last, the lightest, duty
 Of a king's hand to dare: 'tis his to save;

To think, to hear, to labour, to discern,
 To form, to remedy-----to be but one,
 Yet act, and love, and fear, and feel-----for all.
 ---Oh Madam! I am your's 'midst all these claims:
 Be those my glory's, this my duty's care,
 To add my royal father's love to mine,
 And with a doubled rev'rence seek your comfort.
 ---Narbas! what pow'r can language lend my love
 To paint the joy thy sense of pleasure gives me,
 Thou source, and soul, and author, of my virtues?
 Suspend we thoughts thus tender---Let us now
 Summon Mycene's chiefs and calm her people. [*To Mer.*
 Come Madam! he who reigns but climbs to care,
 Tho' safe his throne he finds no softness there;
 Dangers, and doubts, and toils, each moment seize,
 Hang on his bus'ness and perplex his ease:
 Bright but by pomp of wo kings shine in vain,
 Envy'd for anguish and adorn'd for pain. [*Exeunt.*

EPILOGUE.

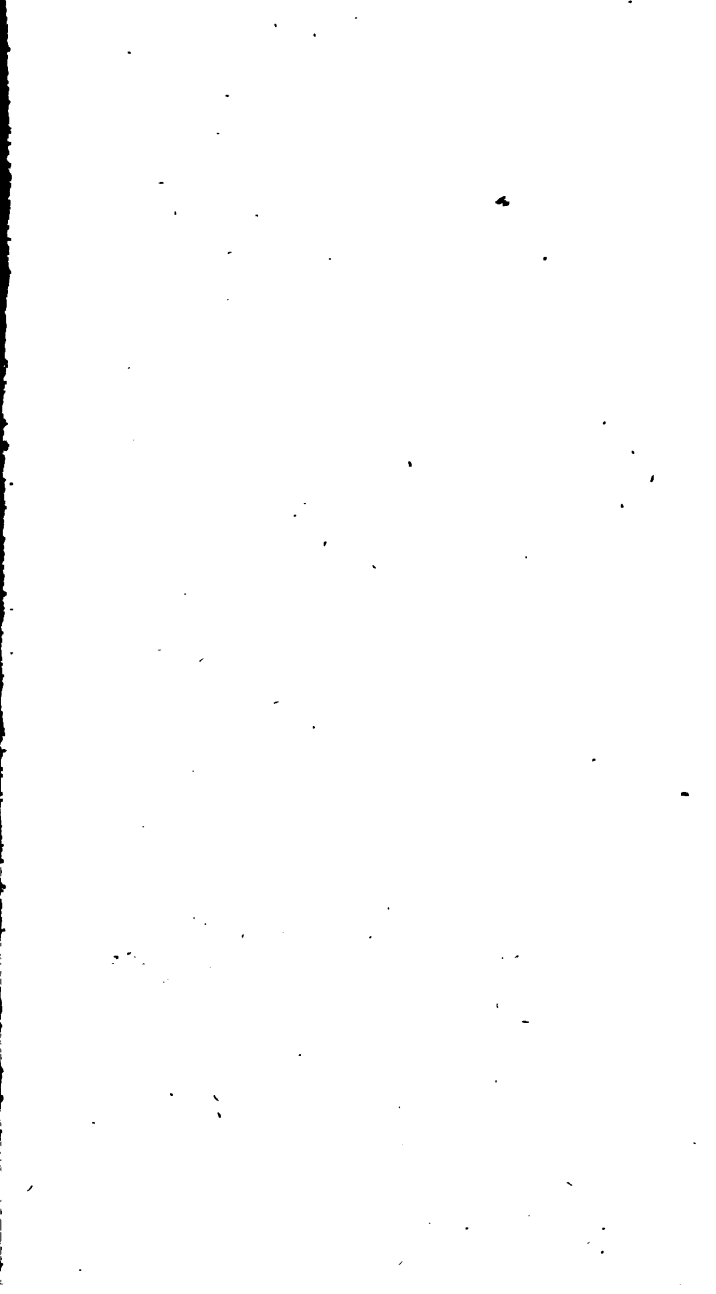
*I'M glad with all my heart I've escap'd my wedding—
 Glad! cry the maids---Heav'n keep such joy from spreading!
 Marriage (poor things!) do n't move their hearts so coldly;
 'Tis a dark leap they own---but Love jumps boldly—
 Fair fall th' advent'ers; I'm no husband bater,
 Only be warn'd by me, and wed no traitor:
 Pain-hunting murmur! born to growl and grumble,
 No king can please him—and no wife can bumble;
 Sick to the soul, be Heav'n his kind physician!
 Earth's ablest drugs are lost upon ambition:
 All Warwick-lane falls short—and to my knowledge
 No cure is hop'd for in our female college.*

*Shun plotting heads, dear ladies!--all miscarries
 When one who bums and haws at midnight marries.
 Better plain downright dunce---no dream pursuing,
 One that means bluntly---and knows what he's doing;
 Not him whose factious mind outsoaring pleasure
 Is still most busy when his wife's at leisure.*

*Better a sportsman sound of wind and hearty—
 Better Sir Sot---than spouse dry drunk with party:
 A hunting husband ballows---and you hear him---
 A drunken deary flagers---and you steer him---
 Each conscious of his wife takes care to make her
 One way or other---an indulg'd partaker.*

*But your sage, saturnine, ambitious, lover
 Keeps no one secret woman wou'd discover:
 Stranger at home, he strolls abroad for blessing,
 And holds whate'er he has not worth possessing:
 Freedom, and mirth, and health, and joy---despises,
 And scorns all rest---be so profoundly wise is!
 At length, thank Heav'n; he dies; kind vapours strike him,
 And leaves behind---ten thousand madmen like him.*

From the APOLLO PRESS,
 by the MARTINS,
 April 13. 1782.





I. Roberts del.

Published for Bells British Theatre May 1778.

Thornthwaite fecit.

MISS HOPKINS in the Character of IRENE.
Blest is Irene! Blest if Selim lives!

BELL'S EDITION.

BARBAROSSA.

A TRAGEDY,

As written by the Rev. Dr. BROWN.

DISTINGUISHING ALSO THE

VARIATIONS OF THE THEATRE,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,

By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,

By Mr. WILD, Prompter.



L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BELL, at the British Library in the Strand.

M DCC LXXX.



P R O L O G U E.

Written by Mr GARRICK, and spoken by him in the
Character of a Country Boy.

Measter! Measter!

IS not my measter here among you, pray?

Nay, speak—my measter wrote this fine new play—

The actor folks are making such a clatter!

They want the Pro-log—I know nought o' th' matter!

He must be there among you—look about—

A weezen, pale-fac'd man, do—find him out—

Pray, measter, come—or all will fall to sheame.

Call mister—hold—I must not tell his name.

Law! what a croud is here! what noise and pother?

Fine lads and lasses! one o' top o't'other

[Pointing to the rows of pit and gallery.]

I cou'd for ever here with wonder geaze!

I ne'er saw church so full in all my days!—

Your servant, surs!—what do you laugh for? Eh!

You donna take me sure for one o' th' play?

You shou'd not flout an honest country-lad—

You think me fool, and I think you half mad:

You're all as strange as I, and stranger too;

And, if you laugh at me, I'll laugh at you. [Laughing.]

I donna like your London tricks, not I,

And since you rais'd my blood, I'll tell you why?

And if you wull, since now I am before ye,

For want of Pro-log, I'll relate my story.

I came from country here to try my fate,

And get a place among the rich and great;

But troth I'm sick o' th' journey I ha' ta'en,

I like it not—wou'd I were whoame again.

First, in the city I took up my station,

And got a place, with one o' th' corporation,

A round big man—he eat a plaguy deal,

Zooks! he'd have beat five ploomen at a meal!

But long with him I cou'd not make abode,

For, cou'd yon think't?—He eat a great sea-toad!

It came from Indies—'twas as big as me,

He call'd it Belly-patch and Capapee:

Law! how I star'd!—I thought,—who knows, but I,

For want of monsters, may be made a pye;

*Rather than tarry here for bribe or gain,
I'll back to whoame, and country-fare again.*

*I left toad-eater ; then I sarv'd a lord,
And there they promis'd!—but ne'er kept their word,
While 'mong the great, this geaming work the trade is,
They mind no more poor servants, than their ladies.*

*A lady next, who lik'd a smart young lad,
Hir'd me forthwith—but, troth, I thought her mad.
She turn'd the world top down, as I may say,
She chang'd the day to neet, the neet to day!
I stood one day with coach, and did but stoop
To put the foot-board down, and with her hoop
She cover'd me all o'er—where are you, Lout?
Here, Maam, says I, for Heaven's sake let me out.*

*I was so sheam'd with all her freakish ways,
She wore her gear so short, so low her stays—
Fine folks shew all for nothing now-a-days!*

*Now I'm the poet's man—I find with wits,
There's nothing sartain—nay, we eat by fits.
Our meals, indeed, are slender,—what of that?
There are but three on's—measter, I, and cat.
Did you but see us all, as I'm a sinner,
You'd scarcely say, which of the three is thinner.*

*My wages all depend on this night's piece,
But shou'd you find that all our swans are geese!
E'fack I'll trust no more to measter's brain,
But pack up all, and whistle whoame again.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

“**T**RAGEDY, as it was anciently composed, hath
 “ been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most
 “ profitable of all other poems. Hence philosophers, and
 “ other graver writers, as Cicero, Plutarch, and others,
 “ frequently cite out of tragic poets, both to adorn and
 “ illustrate their discourse. The apostle Paul himself,
 “ thought it not unworthy to insert a verse of a Greek
 “ poet into the text of Holy Scripture.—Heretofore,
 “ men in highest dignity have laboured, not a little, to
 “ be thought able to compose a tragedy. Of that ho-
 “ nour, Dionysius the elder, was no less ambitious, than
 “ before, of his attaining to the tyranny. Augustus Cæ-
 “ sar also had begun his *Ajax*, but, unable to please his
 “ own judgment, left it unfinished. Seneca, the philoso-
 “ pher, is, by some, thought the author of those trage-
 “ dies, at least the best of them, that go under that name.
 “ Gregory Nazianzen, a father of the church, thought
 “ it not unbeseeming the sanctity of his person to write a
 “ tragedy, which is intitled *Christ Suffering*. This is
 “ mentioned, to vindicate tragedy from the small esteem,
 “ or rather infamy, which, in the account of many, it
 “ undergoes at this day.”

So far the great Milton: who strengthen'd these exam-
 ples by his own. The author hath nothing more to add,
 save only, that he hath aimed to write his piece, in its
 essential parts, according to the model of ancient tragedy,
 so far as modern ideas and manners wou'd permit. And
 he is so gratefully sensible of that favourable reception it
 hath met with from the public, that, in every future at-
 tempt, he will assuredly labour to merit their farther re-
 gards, by keeping in his eye the same great originals.

Dramatis Personæ.

BARBAROSSA.

ACHMÉT.

OTHMAN.

SADI.

ALADIN.

OFFICER.

SLAVE.

ZAPHIRA,

IRENE.

SLAVE.

Officers, Attendants, and Slaves.

SCENE, *the Royal Palace of Algiers.*

Time, a few Hours about Midnight.

B A R B A R O S S A.

A C T I.

Enter OTHMAN and a Slave.

OTHMAN.

A Stranger, say'st thou, that enquires of Othman?
Slave. He does, and waits admittance,

Oth. Did he tell

His name and quality?

Slave. That he declin'd;
But call'd himself thy friend.

Oth. Where didst thou see him?

Slave. Ev'n now, while twilight clos'd the day, I spy'd
him

Musing amid' the ruins of yon tow'r
That overhangs the flood. On my approach,
With aspect stern, and words of import dark,
He question'd me of Othman. Then the tear
Stole from his eye. But when I talk'd of pow'r
And courtly honours here conferr'd on thee,
His frown grew darker: All I wish, he cry'd,
Is to confer with him, and then to die.

Oth. What may this mean? Conduct the stranger to
me.

[*Exit Slave.*]

Perhaps some worthy citizen, return'd
From voluntary exile to Algiers,
Once known in happier days.

Enter SADI.

Ah, Sadi here!

My honour'd friend!

Sa. Stand off—pollute me not.
These honest arms, tho' worn with want, disdain
Thy gorgeous trappings, earn'd by foul dishonour.

Oth. Forbear thy rash reproaches: for, beneath

This habit, which, to thy mistaken eye,
Bespeaks my guilt, I wear a heart as true
As Sadi's to my king.

Sa. Why then beneath
This cursed roof, this black usurper's palace,
Dar'st thou to draw infected air, and live
The slave of insolence! Why lick the dust
Beneath his feet, who laid Algiers in ruin?
But age, which shou'd have taught thee honest caution,
Has taught thee treachery!

Oth. Mistaken man!
Cou'd passion prompt me to licentious speech
Like thine——

Sa. Peace, false one! Peace! The slave to pow'r
Still wears a pliant tongue.—O shame to dwell
With murder, lust, and rapine! did he not
Come from the depths of Barca's solitude,
With fair pretence of faith and firm alliance?
Did not our grateful king, with open arms,
Receive him as his guest? O fatal hour!
Did he not then, with hot, adul't'rous eye,
Gaze on the queen Zaphira? Yes, 'twas lust!
Lust gave th' infernal whisper to his soul,
And bade him murder, if he would enjoy!
O, complicated horrors! hell-born treach'ry!
Then felt our country, when good Selim dy'd!
Yet thou, pernicious traitor, unabash'd
Can'st wear the murd'rer's badge.

Oth. Yet hear me, Sadi——

Sa. What can dishonour plead?

Oth. Yet blame not prudence.

Sa. Prudence! the stale pretence of ev'ry knave!
The traitor's ready mask!

Oth. Yet still I love thee:
Yet unprovok'd by thy intemperate zeal,
Bethink thee!—might I not insult thy flight
With the foul names of fear and perfidy?
Didst thou not fly, when Barbarossa's sword
Reek'd with the blood of thy brave countrymen?
What then did I?—Beneath this hated roof,
In pity to my widow'd queen——

Sa. In pity!

Oth. Yes, Sadi : Heav'n is witness, pity sway'd me.

Sa. Words, words ! dissimulation all, and guilt !

Oth. With honest guile I did enroll my name

In the black list of Barbarossa's friends :

In hope, that some propitious hour might rise,

When heav'n would dash the murd'rer from his throne,

And give young Selim to his orphan'd people.

Sa. Indeed ! can'st thou be true ?

Oth. By heav'n, I am.

Sa. Why then dissemble thus ?

Oth. Have I not told thee ?

I held it vain, to stem the tyrant's pow'r

By the weak fallies of an ill-tim'd rage.

Sa. Enough : I find thee honest : and with pride

Will join thy counsels. This, my faithful arm,

Wasted with misery, shall gain new nerves

For brave resolves. Can aught, my friend, be done ?

Can aught be dar'd ?

Oth. We groan beneath the scourge.

This very morn, on false pretence of vengeance,

For the foul murder of our honour'd king,

Five guiltless wretches perish'd on the rack.

Our long-lov'd friends, and bravest citizens,

Self-banish'd to the desert, mourn in exile :

While the fell tyrant lords it o'er a crew

Of abject sycophants, the needy tools

Of pow'r usurp'd : and a degenerate train

Of slaves in arms.

Sa. O my devoted country !

But say, the widow'd Queen—my heart bleeds for her.

Oth. If pain be life, she lives : but in such woe,

As want and slavery might view with pity,

And bless their happier lot ! Hemm'd round by terrors,

Within this cruel palace, once the seat

Of every joy, thro' sev'n long tedious years,

She weeps her murder'd lord, her exil'd son,

Her people fall'n : the murd'rer of her lord,

Returning now from conquest o'er the Moors,

Tempts her to marriage : spurr'd at once by lust;

And black ambition. But with noble firmness,

Surpassing female, she rejects his vows,

Scorning the horrid union. Mean-time, he,

With ceaseless hate, pursues her exil'd son ;
And—Oh ! detested monster !

[*He weeps.*—

Sa. Yet more deeds
Of cruelty ! just Heav'n !

Oth. His rage pursues
The virtuous youth, ev'n into foreign climes.
Ere this, perhaps, he bleeds. A murd'ring ruffian
Is sent to watch his steps, and plunge the dagger
Into his guiltless breast.

Sa. Is this thy faith !
Tamely to witness to such deeds of horror !
Give me thy poignard ; lead me to the tyrant.
What tho' surrounding guards——

Oth. Repress thy fury.
Thou wilt alarm the palace, wilt involve
Thyself, thy friend, in ruin. Haste thee hence ;
Haste to the remnant of our loyal friends,
And let maturer councils rule thy zeal.

Sa. Yet let us ne'er forget our prince's wrongs.
Remember, Othman, (and let vengeance rise)
How in the pangs of death, and in his gore
Welt'ring, we found our prince ! The deadly dagger
Deep in his heart was fix'd ! His royal blood,
The life-blood of his people, o'er the bath
Ran purple ! O remember ! and revenge !

Oth. Doubt not my zeal. But haste, and seek our
friends.

Near to the western port Almanzor dwells,
Yet uneduc'd by Barbarossa's power.
He will disclose to thee, if aught be heard
Of Selim's safety, or (what more I dread)
Of Selim's death. Thence best may our resolves
Be drawn hereafter. But let caution guide thee.
For in these walks, where tyranny and guilt
Usurp the throne, wakeful suspicions dwell ;
And squint-ey'd jealousy, prone to pervert,
Ev'n looks and smiles to treason.

Sa. I obey thee.
Near to the western port, thou say'st.

Oth. Ev'n there.
Close by the blasted palm-tree, where the mosque
O'erlooks the city. Haste thee hence, my friend.

I would not have thee found within these walls.

[*Flourish.*]

And hark these warlike sounds proclaim th' approach
Of the proud Barbarossa, with his train.

Begone——

Sa. May dire disease and pestilence
Hang o'er his steps!—Farewell—Remember, Othman,
Thy Queen's, thy Prince's, and thy country's wrong.

[*Exit Sadi.*]

Oth. When I forget them, be contempt my lot!
Yet, for the love I bear them, I must wrap
My deep resentments in the spacious guise
Of smiles, and fair deportment.

Enter BARBAROSSA, Guards, &c.

Bar. Valiant Othman,
Are these vile slaves impal'd?

Oth. My Lord, they are.

Bar. Did not the rack extort confession from them?

Oth. They dy'd obdurate: while the melting crowd
Murmur'd out pity for their groans and anguish.

Bar. Curse on their womanish hearts! what, pity slaves
Whom my supreme decree condemn'd to torture?
Are ye not all my slaves, to whom my nod
Gives life or death?

Oth. To doubt thy will is treason.

Bar. I love thee, faithful Othman: but why sits
That sadness on thy brow: For oft' I find thee
Musing and sad; while joy, for my return,
My sword victorious, and the Moors o'erthrown,
Resounds through all my palace.

Oth. Mighty warrior!

The soul, intent on offices of love,
Will oft neglect or scorn the weaker proof
Which smiles or speech can give.

Bar. Well: be it so.

To guard Algiers from anarchy's misrule,
I sway the regal scepter. Who deserves,
Shall meet protection: and who merits not,
Shall meet my wrath in thunder.—But 'tis strange,
That when, with open arms, I would receive
Young Selim; wou'd restore the crown, which death

Rest.

Rest from his father's head—he scorns my bounty,
Shuns me with fullen and obdurate hate,
And proudly kindles war in foreign climes,
Against my pow'r, who sav'd his bleeding country.
Oth. 'Tis strange, indeed——

Entet ALADIN.

Ala. Brave Prince, I bring thee tidings
Of high concernment to Algiers and thee.
Young Selim is no more.

Oth. Indeed!——

Bar. Indeed!—why that astonishment?
He was our bitterest foe.

Oth. So perish all
Thy causeless enemies!

Bar. What says the rumour?
How dy'd the prince, and where?

Ala. The rumour tells,
That flying to Oran, he there begg'd succours
From Ferdinand of Spain, t' invade Algiers.

Bar. From Christian dogs!

Oth. How! league with infidels!

Ala. And there held council with the haughty Spaniard,
To conquer and dethrone thee; but in vain:
For in a dark encounter with two slaves,
Wherein the one fell by his dauntless valour,
Selim at length was slain.

Bar. Ungrateful boy!
Oft' have I courted him to meet my kindness;
But still in vain; he shunn'd me like a pestilence:
Nor cou'd I e'er behold him, since the down
Cover'd his manly cheek.—How many years
Number'd he?

Oth. I think, scarce thirteen, when his father dy'd,
And, now, some twenty.

Bar. Othman, now for proof
Of undissembled service.—Well I know,
Thy long-experienc'd faith hath plac'd thee high
In the Queen's confidence: The crown I wear
Yet totters on my head, till marriage-rites
Have made her mine. Othman, she must be won.
Plead thou my cause of love: Bid her dry up

Her fruitless tears : Paint forth her long delays :
Wake all thy eloquence : Make her but mine,
And such unsought reward shall crown thy zeal,
As shall out-soar thy wishes.

Oth. Mighty King,
Where duty bids, I go.

Bar. Then haste thee, Othman,
Ere yet the rumour of her son's decease,
Hath reach'd her ear ; ere yet the mournful tale
Hath whelm'd her in a new abyss of woe,
And quench'd all soft affection, save for him,
Tell her, I come, borne on the wings of love !——
Haste—fly—I follow thee. [Exit Othman.]
Now, Aladin,

Now fortune bears us to the wish'd for port :
We ride secure on her most prosperous billow.
This was the rock I dreaded. Dost not think
Th' attempt was greatly daring ?

Ala. Aye ; and necessary.
What boot'd it, to cut the old serpent off,
While the young adder nested in his place ?

Bar. True : We have conquer'd now. Algiers is mine,
Without a rival. Thus great souls aspire ;
And boldly snatch at crowns, beyond the reach
Of coward conscience.—Yet I wonder much,
Omar returns not : Omar, whom I sent
On this high trust. I fear, 'tis he hath fall'n.
Didst thou not say two slaves encounter'd Selim ?

Ala. Aye, two ; 'tis rumour'd so.

Bar. And that one fell ?

Ala. Ev'n so : By Selim's hand ; while his companion
Planted his happier steel in Selim's heart.

Bar. Omar, I fear is fall'n. From my right-hand :
I gave my signet to the trusty slave :
And bade him send it, as the certain pledge
Of Selim's death ; if sickness or captivity,
Or wayward fate, shou'd thwart his quick return.

Ala. The rumour yet is young ; perhaps foreruns
The trusty slave's approach.

Bar. We'll wait th' event.
Mean-time give out, that now the widow'd Queen
Hath dry'd her tears, prepar'd to crown my love

By

By marriage-rites : spread wide the flatt'ring tale :
 For if persuasion win not her consent,
 Pow'r shall compel.

Ala. It is indeed a thought
 Which prudence whispers.

Bar. Thou, brave Aladin,
 Hast been the firm companion of my deeds :
 Soon shall my friendship's warmth reward thy faith.—
 This night my will devotes to feast and joy,
 For conquest o'er the Moor. Hence, Aladin ;
 And see the night-watch close the palace round.

[*Exit Aladin.*]

Now to the Queen. My heart expands with hope.
 Let high ambition flourish : in Selim's blood
 Its root is struck : from this, the rising stem
 Proudly shall branch o'er Afric's continent,
 And stretch from shore to shore.

Enter IRENE.

What, drown'd in tears ! Still with thy folly thwart
 Each purpose of my soul ? When pleasures spring
 Beneath our feet, thou spurn'st the proffer'd boon,
 To dwell with sorrow.—Why these sullen tears ?

Ire. Let not these tears offend my father's eye ;
 They are the tears of pity. From the Queen
 I come, thy suppliant.

Bar. On some rude request,
 What would'st thou urge ?

Ire. Thy dread return from war,
 And proffer'd love, have open'd ev'ry wound
 The soft and lenient hand of time had clos'd.
 If ever gentle pity touch'd thy heart,
 Now let it melt ! Urge not thy harsh command
 To see her ! her distracted soul is bent
 To mourn in solitude : she asks no more.

Bar. She mocks my love. How many tedious years
 Have I endur'd her coyness ? Had not war
 And great ambition, call'd me from Algiers,
 Ere this, my pow'r had reap'd what she denies.
 But there's a cause, which touches on my peace,
 And bids me brook no more her false delays.

Ire. O, frown not thus ! sure, pity ne'er deserv'd
 A parent's

A parent's frown ! then look more kindly on me ;
Let thy consenting pity mix with mine,
And heal the woes of weeping majesty !
Unhappy Queen !

Bar. What means that gushing tear ?

Ire. Oh, never shall Irene taste of peace,
While poor Zaphira mourns !

Bar. Is this my child ?

Perverse and stubborn ! — As thou lov'st thy peace,
Dry up thy tears. What ! damp the general triumph
That echoes through Algiers ! which now shall pierce
The vaulted heav'n, as soon as fame shall spread
Young Selim's death, my empire's bitt'rest foe.

Ire. O, generous Selim !

Bar. Ah ! there's more in this !

Tell me, Irene ; on thy duty, tell me ;
As thou dost wish I would not cast thee off,
With an incensed father's curses on thee,
Now tell me why, at this detested name,
A fresh thy sorrow streams ?

Ire. Yes, I will tell thee,
For he is gone ! and dreads thy hate no more !
My father knows, that scarce five moons are past,
Since the Moors seiz'd, and sold me at Oran,
A hopeless captive in a foreign clime !

Bar. Too well I know, and rue the fatal day.
But what of this ?

Ire. Why shou'd I tell, what horrors
Did then beset my soul ? — Oft have I told thee,
How, 'midst the throng, a youth appear'd : his eye
Bright as the morning star !

Bar. And was it Selim ?
Did he redeem thee ?

Ire. With unsparing hand
He paid th' allotted ransom ; and o'erbade
Avrice and appetite. At his feet I wept,
Dissolv'd in tears of gratitude and joy.
But when I told my quality and birth,
He started at the name of Barbarossa ;
And thrice turn'd pale. Yet, with recovery mild,
Go to Algiers, he cry'd ; protect my mother,
And be to her, what Selim is to thee. —

Ev'n such, my father, was the gen'rous youth,
Who, by the hands of bloody, bloody men,
Lies number'd with the dead.

Bar. Amazement chills me!

Was this thy unknown friend, conceal'd from me?
False, faithless child!

Ire. Cou'd gratitude do less!
He said thy hate pursu'd him; thence conjur'd me,
Not to reveal his name.

Bar. Thou treacherous maid!
To stoop to freedom from thy father's foe!

Ire. Alas, my father!
He never was thy foe.

Bar. What! plead for Selim!
Away. He merited the death he found!
Oh coward! traitress to thy father's glory!
Thou shoud'st have liv'd a slave—been sold to shame,
Been banish'd to the depth of howling desarts,
Been aught but what thou art, rather than blot
A father's honour by a deed so vile:—
Hence, from my sight.—Hence, thou unthankful child!
Beware thee! shun the Queen: nor taint her ear
With Selim's fate. Yes, she shall crown my love;
Or, by our prophet, she shall dread my pow'r.

[*Exit Barbarossa.*]

Ire. Unhappy Queen!
To what new scenes of horror art thou doom'd!
O cruel father! hapless child! whom pity
Compels to call him cruel! Gen'rous Selim!
Poor injur'd Queen! who but intreats to die
In her dear father's tents! Thither, good Queen,
My care shall speed thee, while suspicion sleeps,
What tho' my frowning father pour his rage
On my defenceless head? yet innocence
Shall yield her firm support; and conscious virtue
Gild all my days. Cou'd I but save Zaphira,
Let the storm beat, I'll weep and pray, till she
And heav'n forget, my father e'er was cruel.

[*Exit*]

A C T II.

ZAPHIRA and Female Slaves discover'd.

ZAPHIRA.

WHEN shall I be at peace!—O, righteous heav'n,
Strengthen my fainting soul, which fain wou'd rise
To confidence in thee!—But woes on woes
O'erwhelm me! First my husband! now, my son!
Both dead! both slaughter'd by the bloody hand
Of Barbarossa! Sweet content, farewell!
Farewell, sweet hope! Grief is my portion here!
O dire ambition! what infernal pow'r
Unchain'd thee from thy native depth of hell,
To stalk the earth with thy destructive train,
Murder and lust! to waste domestic peace,
And ev'ry heart-felt joy!

Enter OTHMAN.

O faithful Othman!

Our fears were true! My Selim is no more!

Oth. Has then the fatal story reach'd thine ear?
Inhuman tyrant!

Zaph. Strike him, heav'n, with thunder!
Nor let Zaphira doubt thy providence.

Oth. 'Twas what we fear'd. Accuse not heav'n's
high will,

Nor struggle with the ten-fold chain of fate,
That links thee to thy woes! O, rather yield,
And wait the happier hour, when innocence
Shall weep no more. Rest in that pleasing hope,
And yield thyself to heav'n.—My honour'd Queen,
The King——

Zaph. Whom stil'st thou King?

Oth. 'Tis Barbarossa.

He means to see thee.——

Zaph. Curses blast the tyrant!
Does he assume the name of King?

Oth. He does.

Zaph. O title vilely purchas'd! by the blood

Of innocence ! By treachery and murder !
 May heav'n, incens'd, pour down its vengeance on him ;
 Blast all his joys, and turn them into horror ;
 Till phrenzy rise, and bid him curse the hour
 That gave his crimes their birth ! My faithful Othman !
 My sole surviving prop ! Canst thou devise
 No secret means, by which I may escape
 This hated palace ! With undaunted step
 I'd roam the waste, to reach my father's vales
 Of dear Mutija !—Can no means be found,
 To fly these black'ning horrors that surround me ?

Oth. That hope is vain ! The tyrant knows thy hate ;
 Hence, day and night, his watchful guards surround thee,
 Impenetrable as walls of adamant.
 Curb then thy mighty griefs : Justice and truth
 He mocks as shadows : Rouse not then, his anger.
 Let soft persuasion and mild eloquence,
 Redeem that liberty, which stern rebuke
 Wou'd rob thee of for ever.

Zaph. Cruel talk !

For royalty to bow,—an injur'd queen
 To kneel for liberty ! And, Oh ! to whom !
 Ev'n to the murd'rer of her lord and son !
 O perish, first, Zaphira ! Yes, I'll die !
 For what is life to me ! My dear, dear lord !
 My hapless child ! Yes, I will follow you.

Oth. Wilt thou not see him, then ?

Zaph. I will not, Othman ;
 Or, if I do, with bitter imprecation,
 More keen than poison shot from serpents tongues,
 I'll pour my curses on him !

Oth. Will Zaphira,
 Thus meanly sink in woman's fruitless rage,
 When she should wake revenge ?

Zaph. Revenge !—O tell me—
 Tell me but how ! what can a helpless woman ?

Oth. Gain but the tyrant's leave, and reach thy father :
 Pour thy complaints before him : Let thy wrongs
 Kindle his indignation, to pursue
 This vile usurper, till unceasing war
 Blast his ill-gotten pow'r.

Zaph.

Zaph. rising. Ah!—say'st thou, Othman?
Thy words have shot like lightning thro' my frame;
And all my soul's on fire!—Thou faithful friend!
Yes; with more gentle speech I'll sooth his pride;
Regain my freedom! seek my father's tents;
There paint my countless woes. His kindling rage
Shall wake the vallies into honest vengeance:
The sudden storm shall pour on Barbarossa;
And ev'ry glowing warrior steep his shaft
In deadlier poison, to revenge my wrongs.

Oth. There spoke the Queen. But as thou lov'st thy
freedom

Touch not on Selim's fate. Thy soul will kindle,
And passion mount in flames that will consume thee.

Zaph. My murder'd son!—Yes, to revenge thy death,
I'll speak a language which my heart disdains.

Oth. Peace, peace: The tyrant comes: Now injur'd
Queen,

Plead for thy freedom; hope for just revenge;
And check each rising passion! [*Exit Othman.*]

Enter BARBAROSSA.

Bar. Hail, sov'reign fair! Thrice honour'd Queen!
in whom

Beauty and majesty conspire to charm!
Behold the conqu'ror, whose deciding voice
Can speak the fate of kingdoms, at thy feet
Lies conquer'd by thy pow'r!

Zaph. O Barbarossa!
No more the pride of conquest e'er can charm
My widow'd heart! With my departed Lord
My love lies bury'd! I should meet thy flame
With sullen tears and cold indifference.
Then turn thee to some happier fair, whose heart
May crown thy growing love, with love sincere;
For I have none to give!

Bar. Love ne'er should die:
'Tis the soul's cordial: 'Tis the fount of life;
Therefore shou'd spring eternal in the breast.
One object lost, another shou'd succeed;
And all our life be love.

Zaph. Urge me no more:—Thou might'st with equal
hope

Woo the cold marble, weeping o'er a tomb,
 To meet thy wishes ! but if gen'rous love
 Dwell in thy breast, vouchsafe me proof sincere :
 Give me safe convoy to the native vales
 Of dear Mutija, where my father reigns.

Bar. O blind to proffer'd bliss ! what, fondly quit
 This lofty palace, and the envy'd pomp
 Of empire, for an Arab's wand'ring tent !
 Where the mock chieftain leads his vagrant tribes
 From plain to plain, as thirst or famine sways ;
 Obscurely vain ! and faintly shadows out
 The majesty of kings !—Far other joys
 Here shall attend thy call : the winged bark
 For thee shall traverse seas ; and ev'ry clime
 Be tributary to Zaphira's charms.
 To thee, exalted fair, submissive realms
 Shall bow the neck ; and swarthy kings and queens,
 From the far-distant Niger and the Nile,
 Drawn captive at my conqu'ring chariot-wheels,
 Shall kneel before thee.

Zaph. Pomp and pow'r are toys,
 Which ev'n the mind at ease may well disdain.
 But, ah ! what mockery is the tinsel pride
 Of splendour, when, by wasting woes, the mind
 Lies desolate within ! Such, such is mine !
 O'erwhelm'd with ills, and dead to every joy ;
 Envy me not this last request, to die
 In my dear father's tents !

Bar. Thy suit is vain——

Zaph. Thus kneeling at thy feet——

Bar. Thou thankless fair !

Thus to repay the labours of my love !
 Had I not seiz'd the throne when Selim dy'd,
 Ere this, thy foes had laid Algiers in ruin :
 I check'd the warring pow'rs, and gave you peace.

Zaph. Peace dost thou call it ! what can worse be fear'd
 From the war's rage, than violence and blood ?
 Have not unceasing horrors mark'd thy reign ;
 Thro' sev'n long years, thy slaught'ring sword hath reek'd
 With guiltless blood.

Bar. With guiltless blood !—Take heed——

Rouse

Rouse not my slumb'ring rage ; nor vindicate
Thy country's guilt and treason.

Zaph. Where violence reigns, there innocence is guilt ;
And virtue, treason.—Know, Zaphira scorns
Thy menace.—Yes—thy slaughter'ring sword hath reek'd
With guiltless blood. Through thee, exile and death
Have thinn'd Algiers. Is this thy boasted peace ?
So might the tyger boast the peace he brings,
When he o'erleaps by stealth, and wastes the fold.

Bar. Ungrateful Queen ! I'll give thee proof of love,
Beyond thy sex's pride ! but make thee mine,
I will descend the throne, and call thy son
From banishment to empire.

Zaph. Oh, my heart !
Can I bear this ?——
Inhuman tyrant ! curses on thy head !
May dire remorse and anguish haunt thy throne,
And gender in thy bosom fell despair !
Despair as deep as mine !

Bar. What means Zaphira ?
What means this burst of grief ?

Zaph. Thou fell destroyer !
Had not guilt steel'd thy heart, awak'ning conscience
Wou'd flash conviction on thee, and each look,
Shot from these eyes, be arm'd with serpent-horrors,
To turn thee into stone !—Relentless man !
Who did the bloody deed ? Oh, tremble guilt,
Where'er thou art !—Look on me !—Tell me, tyrant—
Who slew my blameless son ?

Bar. What envious tongue,
My foe, hath dar'd to taint my name with slander ?
This is the rumour of some co'z'ning slave,
Who thwarts my peace. Believe it not, Zaphira ;
Thy Selim lives : nay, more, he soon shall reign,
If thou consent to bless me.

Zaph. Never ! Oh, never—Sooner wou'd I roam
An unknown exile through the torrid climes
Of Afric, sooner dwell with wolves and tygers,
Than mount, with thee, my murder'd Selim's throne !

Bar. Rash Queen, forbear ; think on thy captive state :
Remember, that, within these palace-walls,
I am omnipotent : that every knee—

Bends at my dread approach : that shame and honour,
 Reward and punishment, await my nod,
 The vassals of my pleasure.—Yield thee then :
 Avert the gath'ring horrors that surround thee,
 And dread my pow'r incens'd.

Zaph. Dares thy licentious tongue pollute mine ear
 With that foul menace !——Tyrant ! dread'st thou not
 Th' all-seeing eye of heav'n, its lifted thunder,
 And all the red'ning vengeance which it stores
 For crimes like thine ? Yet know, thy threats are vain,
 Tho' robb'd by thee of ev'ry dear support,
 No tyrant's threat can awe the free-born soul,
 That greatly dares to die. [Exit Zaphira.]

Bar. Where shou'd she learn the tale of Selim's death !
 Cou'd Othman dare to tell it ? if he did,
 My rage shall sweep him, swifter than the whirlwind,
 To instant death !——Curse on her steadiness !
 She lords it o'er my heart. There is a charm
 Of majesty in virtue, that disarms
 Reluctant pow'r, and bends the struggling will
 From her most firm resolve.

Enter ALADIN.

Oh, Aladin !
 Timely thou com'st, to ease my lab'ring thought,
 That swells with indignation and despair.
 This stubborn woman——

Ala. What, unconquer'd still ?

Bar. The news of Selim's fate hath reach'd her ear.
 Whence could this come ?

Ala. I can resolve the doubt.
 A female slave, attendant on Zaphira,
 O'erheard the messenger who brought the tale,
 And gave it to her ear.

Bar. Perdition seize her !
 Nor threats can move, nor promise now assure
 Her haughty soul : nay, she defies my pow'r :
 And talks of death, as if her female form
 Inshrin'd some hero's spirit.

Ala. Let her rage foam,
 I bring thee tidings that will ease thy pain.

Bar.

Bar. Say'st thou?—Speak on—O give me quick relief!—

Ala. The gallant youth is come who slew her son.

Bar. Who, Omar!

Ala. No; unhappy Omar fell

By Selim's hand. But Achmet, whom he join'd

His brave associate, so the youth bids tell thee,

Revenge'd his death by Selim's.

Bar. Gallant youth!

Bears he the signet?

Ala. Aye.

Bar. That speaks him true.—Conduct him, Aladin.

[Exit Aladin.]

This is beyond my hope. The secret pledge

Restor'd, prevents suspicion of the deed,

While it confirms it done.

Enter ACHMET and ALADIN.

Ach. Hail, mighty Barbarossa! As the pledge

[Kneels.]

Of Selim's death, behold thy ring restor'd:

That pledge will speak the rest.

Bar. Rise, valiant youth!

But first, no more a slave—I give thee freedom.

Thou art the youth whom Omar (now no more)

Join'd his companion in this brave attempt?

Ach. I am.

Bar. Then tell me how you sped.—Where found ye
That insolent!

Ach. We found him at Oran,

Plotting deep mischief to thy throne and people.

Bar. Well ye repaid the traitor—

Ach. As we ought.

While night drew on, we leapt upon our prey.

Full at his heart brave Omar aim'd the poignard,

Which Selim, shunning, wrench'd it from his hand,

Then plung'd it in his breast. I hasten'd on.

Too late to save, yet I revenge'd my friend:

My thirsty dagger, with repeated blows,

Search'd every artery: They fell together,

Gasping in folds of mortal enmity;

And thus in frowns expir'd.

Bar.

Bar. Well hast thou sped.

Thy dagger did its office, faithful Achmet;
And high reward shall wait thee.—One thing more—
Be the thought fortunate!—Go, seek the Queen.
For know, the rumour of her Selim's death
Hath reach'd her ear: Hence dark suspicions rise,
Squinting at me. Go, tell her, that thou saw'st
Her son expire; that, with his dying breath,
He did conjure her to receive my vows,
And give her country peace.—That, sure, will kill
Suspicion. Aladin, that, sure, will win her.

Ala. 'Tis wisely thought.—It must.

Enter OTHMAN.

Bar. Most welcome, Othman.

Behold this gallant stranger. He hath done
The state good service. Let some high reward
Await him; such as may o'erpay his zeal.
Conduct him to the Queen; for he hath tidings
Worthy her ear, from her departed son;
Such as may win her love.—Come, Aladin:
The banquet waits our presence: Festal joy
Laughs in the mantling goblet; and the night,
Illumin'd by the taper's dazzling beam,
Rivals departed day. [*Exeunt Bar. and Ala.*]

Ach. What anxious thought
Rolls in thine eye, and heaves thy lab'ring breast?
Why join'st thou not the loud excess of joy,
That riots thro' the palace?

Oth. Dar'st thou tell me,
On what dark errand thou art here?

Ach. I dare.

Dost thou not see the savage lines of blood
Deform my visage? Read'st not in mine eye
Remorseless fury?—I am Selim's murd'rer.

Oth. His murd'rer!

Ach. Start not from me.

My dagger thirsts not but for regal blood.
Why this amazement?

Oth. Amazement!—No—'Tis well.—'Tis as it should
be.—

He was indeed a foe to Barbarossa.

Ach

Ach. And therefore to Algiers :—Was it not so?
Why dost thou pause? What passion shakes thy frame?

Oth. Fate, do thy worst! I can no more dissemble!—
Can I, unmov'd, behold the murd'ring ruffian,
Smear'd with my prince's blood?—Go, tell the tyrant,
Othman defies his pow'r; that, tir'd with life,
He dares his bloody hand, and pleads to die.

Ach. What, didst thou love this Selim?

Oth. All men lov'd him.

He was of such unmix'd and blameless quality,
That envy, at his praise, stood mute, nor dar'd
To sully his fair name! Remorseless tyrant!

Ach. I do commend thy faith. And since thou lov'st
him,

I'll whisper to thee, that with honest guile
I have deceiv'd this tyrant Barbarossa :
Selim is yet alive.

Oth. Alive!

Ach. Nay, more——

Selim is in Algiers.

Oth. Impossible!

Ach. Why, if thou doubt'st, I'll bring him hither,
straight.

Oth. Not for an empire!

Thou might'st as well bring the devoted lamb
Into the tyger's den.

Ach. Nay, but I'll bring him

Hid in such deep disguise, as shall deride
Suspicion, tho' she wear the lynx's eyes.
Not ev'n thyself couldst know him.

Oth. Yes, sure: too sure, to hazard such an awful
trial!

Ach. Yet seven revolving years, worn out
In tedious exile, may have wrought such change
Of voice and feature, in the state of youth,
As might elude thine eye.

Oth. No time can blot

The mem'ry of his sweet majestic mien!
The lustre of his eye! Nay, more, he wears
A mark indelible, a beauteous scar,
Made on his forehead by a furious pard,
Which, rushing on his mother, Selim slew.

Ach.

Ach. A scar!

Oth. Aye, on his forehead.

Ach. What, like this?

[*Lifting his Turban.*

Oth. Whom do I see!—am I awake!—my Prince!

[*Kneels.*

My honour'd, honour'd King!

Sel. Rise, faithful Othman!

Thus let me thank thy truth!

[*Embraces him.*

Oth. Oh, happy hour!

Sel. Why dost thou tremble thus? Why grasp my hand?

And why that ardent gaze? Thou canst not doubt me!

Oth. Ah, no! I see thy fire in ev'ry line.——

How did my prince escape the murd'rer's hand?

Sel. I wrench'd the dagger from him, and gave back
That death he meant to bring. The ruffian wore
The tyrant's signet:—Take this ring, he cry'd,
The sole return my dying hand can make thee
For its accurs'd attempt: This pledge restor'd,
Will prove thee slain: Safe may'st thou see Algiers,
Unknown to all.—This said, th' assassin dy'd.

Oth. But how to gain admittance, thus unknown?

Sel. Disguis'd as Selim's murderer I come:
Th' accomplice of the deed: The ring restor'd,
Gain'd credence to my words.

Oth. Yet ere thou cam'st, thy death was rumour'd here.

Sel. I spread the flatt'ring tale, and sent it hither;
That babbling rumour, like a lying dream,
Might make belief more easy. Tell me, Othman,
And yet I tremble to approach the theme——
How fares my mother? Does she still sustain
Her native greatness?

Oth. Still: In vain the tyrant
Tempts her to marriage, tho' with insidious threats
Of death or violation.

Sel. May kind heav'n
Strengthen her virtue, and by me reward it!
When shall I see her, Othman?

Oth. Yet, my Prince,
I tremble for thy presence.

Sel. Let not fear
Sully thy virtue; 'Tis the lot of guilt

To tremble. What hath innocence to do with fear?

Oth. Yet think—should Barbarossa—

Sel. Dread him not—

Thou know'st, by his command, I see Zaphira,
And wrapt in this disguise, I walk secure,
As if from heav'n some guardian pow'r attending,
Threw ten-fold night around me.

Oth. Still my heart

Forebodes some dire event!—O quit these walls!

Sel. Not till a deed be done, which ev'ry tyrant
Shall tremble when he hears.

Oth. What means my prince?

Sel. To take just vengeance for a father's blood,
A mother's sull'ring, and a people's groans.

Oth. Alas, my Prince! Thy single arm is weak
To combat multitudes!

Sel. Therefore I come,

That in this murderer's guise—Ere morning shines,
This, Othman—this—shall drink the tyrant's blood.

[Shows a dagger.]

Oth. Heav'n shield thy precious life—Let caution rule
Thy headlong zeal!

Sel. Nay, think not that I come
Blindly impell'd by fury or despair:
For I have seen our friends, and parted now
From Sadi and Almanzor.

Oth. Say—what hope?
My soul is all attention.

Sel. Mark me, then;
A chosen band of citizens this night
Will storm the palace: while the glutted troops
Lie drench'd in surfeit; the confed'rate city,
Bold thro' despair, have sworn to break their chain
By one wide slaughter. I, mean-time, have gain'd
The palace, and will wait th' appointed hour,
To guard Zaphira from the tyrant's rage,
Amid' the deathful uproar.

Oth. Heav'n protect thee—
Tis dreadful—What's the hour!

Sel. I left our friends
In secret council. Ere the dead of night

Brave

Brave Sadi will report their last resolves.—

Now lead me to the Queen.—

Oth. Brave Prince, beware !

Her joy's or fear's excess, wou'd sure betray thee.

Thou shalt not see her, till the tyrant perish !

Sel. I must.—I feel some secret impulse urge me.

Who knows that 'tis not the last parting interview,

We ever shall obtain ?

Oth. Then, on thy life,

Do not reveal thyself.—Assume the name

Of Selim's friend ; sent to confirm her virtue,

And warn her that he lives.

Sel. It shall be so : I yield me to thy will.

Oth. Thou greatly daring youth ! May angels watch,

And guard thy upright purpose ! That Algiers

May reap the blessings of thy virtuous reign,

And all thy godlike father shine in thee !

Sel. Oh, thou hast rous'd a thought, on which revenge

Mounts with redoubled fire !—Yes, here, ev'n here,—

Beneath this very roof, my honour'd father

Shed round his blessings, till accursed treach'ry

Stole on his peaceful hour ! O, blessed shade !

If yet thou hover'st o'er thy once-lov'd clime,

Now aid me to redress thy bleeding wrongs !

Infuse thy mighty spirit into my breast,

Thy firm and dauntless fortitude, unaw'd

By peril, pain, or death ! that, undismay'd,

I may pursue the just intent : and dare

Or bravely to revenge, or bravely die.

[*Exeunt.*]

A C T III.

Enter IRENE.

CAN air-drawn visions mock the waking eye ?—

Sure 'twas his image !—Yet, his presence here—

After full rumour had confirm'd him dead !

Beneath this hostile roof to court destruction !

It staggers all belief ! Silent he shot

Athwart my view, amid' the glimmering lamps,

With swift and ghost-like step, that seem'd to shun
 All human converse. This way, sure, he mov'd.
 But oh, how chang'd ! He wears no gentle smiles,
 But terror in his frown. He comes.—'Tis he :—
 For Othman points him thither, and departs.
 Disguis'd, he seeks the Queen : Secure, perhaps,
 And heedless of the ruin that surrounds him.
 O generous Selim ! can I see thee thus ;
 And not forwarn such virtue of its fate !
 Forbid it gratitude !

Enter SELIM.

Sel. Be still, ye sighs !
 Ye struggling tears of filial love, be still.
 Down, down fond heart !
Ire. Why, stranger, dost thou wander here ?
Sel. Oh, ruin ! *[Shunning her.]*
Ire. Blest, is Irene ! Blest if Selim lives !
Sel. Am I betray'd !
Ire. Betray'd to whom ? To her
 Whose grateful heart would rush on death to save thee.
Sel. It was my hope,
 That time had veil'd all semblance of my youth,
 And thrown the mask of manhood o'er my visage.—
 Am I then known ?
Ire. To none, but love and me.—
 To me, who late beheld thee at Oran ;
 Who saw thee here, beset with unseen peril,
 And flew to save the guardian of my honour.
Sel. Thou sum of ev'ry worth ! Thou heav'n of
 sweetness !
 How cou'd I pour forth all my soul before thee,
 In vows of endless truth !—It must not be !—
 This is my destin'd gaol !—The mansion drear,
 Where grief and anguish dwell ! where bitter tears,
 And sighs, and lamentations, choke the voice,
 And quench the flame of love !
Ire. Yet, virtuous prince,
 ho' love be silent, gratitude may speak.
 Hear then her voice, which warns thee from these walls.
 Mine be the grateful task, to tell the Queen,
 Ere Selim lives. Ruin and death inclose thee.

O speed thee hence, while yet destruction sleeps !

Sel. 'Too generous maid ! Oh, heav'n ! that Barbarossa
Shou'd be Irene's father.

Ire. Injur'd Prince !

Lose not a thought on me ! I know thy wrongs,
And merit not thy love. No, learn to hate me.

Or if Irene e'er can hope such kindness,

First pity, then forget me !

Sel. When I do,

May heav'n pour down its righteous vengeance on me !

Ire. Hence ; haste thee, hence !

Sel. Wou'd it were possible !

Ire. What can prevent it ?

Sel. Justice ! fate, and justice !

A murder'd father's wrongs !

Ire. Ah, prince, take heed !

I have a father too.

Sel. What did I say ?—my father ?—not my father.—

Can I depart till I have seen Zaphira ?—

Ire. Justice, said'st thou ?

That word hath struck me, like a peal of thunder.

Thine eye, which won't to melt with gentle love,

Now glares with terror ! Thy approach by night—

Thy dark disguise, thy looks, and fierce demeanor,

Yes, all conspire to tell me, I am lost.

Think, Selim, what Irene must endure,

Shou'd she be guilty of a father's blood !

Sel. A father's blood !

Ire. Too sure. In vain thou hid'st

Thy dire intent ; forbid it, heav'n, Irene

Shou'd see destruction hov'ring o'er her father,

And not prevent the blow.

Sel. Is this thy love,

Thy gratitude to him, who sav'd thy honour ?

Ire. 'Tis gratitude to him who gave me life :

He who preserv'd ~~me~~ claims the second place.

Sel. Is he not a tyrant, murderer ?

Ire. O spare my shame I am his daughter still !

Sel. Wou'dst thou become the partner of his crimes ?

Ire. Forbid it, heav'n.—Yet I must save a father.

Sel. Come on then. Lead me to him. Glut thine eye
With Selim's blood——

Ire.

Ire. Was e'er distress like mine?
O Selim, can I see my father perish?
Wou'd I had ne'er been born!

[Weeps.]

Sel. Thou virtuous maid;
My heart bleeds for thee.

Ire. Quit, O quit these walls,
Heav'n will ordain some gentler, happier means,
To heal thy woes; thy dark attempt is big
With horror and destruction. Generous prince,
Resign thy dreadful purpose, and depart.

Sel. May not I see Zaphira, ere I go?
Thy gentle pity will not, sure, deny us
The mournful pleasure of a parting tear?

Ire. Go, then, and give her peace. But fly these walls,
As soon as morning shines:—Else, tho' despair
Drives me to madness;—yet—to save a father—
O Selim, spare my tongue the horrid sentence!
Fly, ere destruction seize thee!

[Exit Irene.]

Sel. Death and ruin!
Must I then fly?—what!—Coward-like betray
My father, mother, friends!—Vain terrors, hence!
Danger looks big, to fear's deluded eye:
But courage on the heights and steep of fate,
Dares snatch her glorious purpose from the edge
Of peril: and while sick'ning caution shrinks,
Or self-betray'd, falls headlong down the steep;
Calm resolution, unappal'd, can walk
The giddy brink, secure.—Now to the Queen.—
How shall I dare to meet her thus unknown?
How stifle the warm transports of my heart,
Which pants at her approach.—Who waits Zaphira?—

Enter a female SLAVE.

Sla. Whence this intrusion, stranger? at an hour
Destin'd to rest?

Sel. I come, to seek the Queen,
On matter of such import, as may claim
Her speedy audience.

Sla. Thy request is vain,
Ev'n now the Queen hath heard the mournful tale
Of her son's death, and drown'd in grief she lies.
Thou canst not see her.

Sel. Tell the Queen, I come
On message from her dear, departed son;
And bring his last request..

Sl. I'll haste to tell her.
With all a mother's tend'rest love she'll fly,
To meet that name. [Exit Slave.

Sel. O ill-dissembling heart!—my ev'ry limb
Trembles with grateful terror!—Wou'd to heav'n
I had not come! Some look, or starting tear,
Will sure betray me—Honest guile, assist
My fault'ring tongue!

Enter ZAPHIRA.

Zaph. Where is this pious stranger?
Say, gen'rous youth, whose pity leads thee thus
To seek the weeping mansions of distress!
Didst thou behold in death my hapless son?
Didst thou receive my Selim's parting breath?
Did he remember me?

Sel. Most honour'd Queen;
Thy son,—forgive these gushing tears that flow
To see distress like thine!

Zaph. I thank thy pity!
'Tis generous thus to feel for others woe.—
What of my son? say, didst thou see him die?

Sel. By Barbarossa's dread command I come,
To tell thee, that these eyes alone beheld
Thy son expire.

Zaph. Oh heav'n!—my child, my child!

Sel. That, ev'n in death, the pious youth remember'd
His royal mother's woes.

Zaph. Where, where was I?
Relentless fate!—that I shou'd be deny'd
The mournful privilege to see him die!
To clasp him in the agony of death,
And catch his parting soul. O tell me all,
All that he said and look'd: Deep in my heart
That I may treasure ev'ry parting word,
Each dying whisper of my dear, dear son!

Sel. Let not my words offend.—What if he said,
Go, tell my hapless mother, that her tears
Have stream'd too long: Then bid her weep no more:

Bid

Bid her forget the husband and the son,
In Barbarossa's arms!

Zaph. O, false as hell!

Thou art some creeping slave to Barbarossa,
Sent to surprise my unsuspecting heart!
False slave, begone!—My son betray me thus!—
Could he have e'er conceiv'd so base a purpose,
My griefs for him thou'd end in great disdain!—
But he was brave; and scorn'd a thought so vile!
Wretched Zaphira! how art thou become
The sport of slaves!—O griefs incurable!

Sel. Yet hope for peace, unhappy Queen! thy woes
May yet have end,

Zaph. Why weep'st thou, crocodile?
Thy treacherous tears are vain.

Sel. My tears are honest.
I am not what thou think'st.

Zaph. Who art thou then?

Sel. Oh, my full heart—I am—thy friend, and Selim's.
I come not to insult, but heal thy woes—
Now check thy heart's wild tumult, while I tell thee—
Perhaps—thy son yet lives.

Zaph. O, gracious heav'n!
Do I not dream? say, stranger—didst thou tell me,
Perhaps my Selim lives?—What do I ask?
Fond, fond, and fruitless hope!—What mortal pow'r
Can e'er reanimate his mangled corse,
Shoot life into the cold and silent tomb,
Or bid the ruthless grave give up its dead?

Sel. O pow'rful nature, thou wilt sure betray me!

[*Aside.*

Thy Selim lives: for since his rumour'd death,
I saw him at Oran.

Zaph. Ye heav'nly pow'rs!—
Didst thou not say, thou saw'st my son expire?
Didst not, ev'n now, relate his dying words?

Sel. It was an honest falsehood, meant to prove
Zaphira's unstain'd virtue.

Zaph. Why—but Othman—
Othman affirm'd that my poor son was dead:
And I have heard, the murderer is come,
In triumph o'er his dear and innocent blood.

Sel. I am that murderer.—Beneath this guise,
I spread th' abortive tale of Selim's death,
And haply won the tyrant's confidence.
Hence gain'd access : and from thy Selim tell thee,
Selim yet lives ; and honours all thy virtues.

Zaph. O, generous youth, who art thou?—From what
clime

Comes such exalted virtue, as dares give
A pause to griefs like mine!—As dares approach,
And prop the ruin tott'ring on its base,
Which selfish caution shuns!—Oh, say—who art thou?

Sel. A friendless youth, self-banish'd with thy son ;
Long his companion in distress and danger :
One who rever'd thy worth in prosp'rous days :
And, more, reveres thy virtue in distress.

Zaph. O tell me then—mock not my woes,
But tell me truly—does my Selim live?

Sel. He does, by heav'n!

Zaph. And does he still remember
His father's wrongs, and mine!

Sel. He bade me tell thee,
That in his heart indelibly are stamp'd
His father's wrongs, and thine : that he but waits
'Till awful justice may unsheath her sword,
And lust and murder tremble at her frown !
That, till the arrival of that happy hour,
Deep in his soul the hidden fire shall glow,
And his breast labour with the great revenge!

Zaph. Eternal blessings crown my virtuous son !
I feel my heart revive ! Here, peace once more
Begins to dawn.

Sel. Much honour'd Queen, farewell.

Zaph. Not yet—not yet—indulge a mother's love !
In thee, the kind companion of his griefs,
Methinks I see my Selim stand before me.
Depart not yet. A thousand fond requests
Croud on my mind. Wishes, and pray'rs, and tears,
Are all I have to give. O bear him these !

Sel. Take comfort then ; for know, thy son, o'erjoy'd
To rescue thee, wou'd bleed at ev'ry vein !——
Bid her, he said, yet hope we may be blest !
Bid her remember that the ways of heav'n,

Tho'

Tho' dark, are just :—that oft some guardian pow'r
Attends unseen to save the innocent !

But if high heav'n decrees our fall,—O bid her
Firmly to wait the stroke, prepar'd alike
To live or die ! and then he wept, as I do.

Zaph. O righteous heav'n ! Thou hast at length o'er-
pay'd

My bitt'rest pangs ; if my dear Selim lives,
And lives for me !—hear my departing pray'r : [*Kneels.*
O spare my son !—Protect his tender years !
Be thou his guide through dangers and distress !
Soften the rigours of his cruel exile,
And lead him to his throne !—When I am gone,
Bless thou his peaceful reign ! Oh, early bless him
With the sweet pledges of connubial love ;
That he may win his virtue's just reward,
And taste the raptures which a parent's heart
Reaps from a child like him ! Not for myself,—
But my dear son,—accept my parting tears !

[*Exit Zaphira.*

Sel. Now, swelling heart,
Indulge the luxury of grief ! Flow tears !
And rain down transport in the shape of sorrow !
Yes, I have sooth'd her woes ; have found her noble :
And to have giv'n this respite to her pangs,
O'erpay all pain and peril !—Pow'ful virtue !
How infinite thy joys, when ev'n thy griefs
Are pleasing !—Thou, superior to the frowns
Of fate, can'st pour thy sunshine o'er the soul,
And brighten woe to rapture !

Enter OTHMAN and SADI.

Honour'd friends !

How goes the night ?

Sa. 'Tis well-nigh midnight.

Oth. What—in tears, my prince ?

Sel. But tears of joy : for I have seen Zaphira,
And pour'd the balm of peace into her breast :

I sink not these tears unnerve me, valiant friends ;

They have but harmoniz'd my soul ; and wak'd

That is man within me, to disdain

Sil, or death.—What tidings from the city ?

Sa.

Sa. All, all is ready. Our confed'rate friends
Burn with impatience, till the hour arrive.

Sel. What is the signal of the appointed hour ?

Sa. The midnight watch gives signal of our meeting :
And when the second watch of night is rung,
The work of death begins.

Sel. Speed, speed ye minutes !
Now let the rising whirlwind shake Algiers,
And justice guide the storm ! Scarce two hours hence—

Sa. Scarce more than one.

Sel. But as ye love my life,
Let your zeal hasten on the great event :
The tyrant's daughter found, and knew me here ;
And half suspects the cause.

Oth. Too daring Prince,
Retire with us ! her fears will sure betray thee ?

Sel. What, leave my helpless mother here a prey
To cruelty and lust—I'll perish first :
This very night the tyrant threatens violence :
I'll watch his steps : I'll haunt him thro' the palace :
And, shou'd he meditate a deed so vile,
I'll hover o'er him like an unseen pestilence,
And blast him in his guilt !

Sa. Intrepid Prince !
Worthy of Empire !—Yet accept my life,
My worthless life : do thou retire with Othman ;
I will protect Zaphira.

Sel. Think'st thou, Sadi,
That when the trying hour of peril comes,
Selim will shrink into a common man !
Worthless were he to rule, who dares not claim
Pre-eminence in danger. Urge no more.
Here shall my station be : And if I fall,
O friends let me have vengeance !—Tell me now,
Where is the tyrant ?

Oth. Revelling at the banquet.

Sel. 'Tis good.—Now tell me how our pow'rs are destin'd ?

Sa. Near ev'ry port, a secret band is posted :
By these the watchful centinels must perish :
The rest is easy : for the glutted troops
Lie drown'd in sleep ; the dagger's cheapest prey.

Almanzor,

Almanzor, with his friends, will circle round
The avenues of the palace. Othman and I
Will lead our brave confederates (all sworn
To conquer or to die) and burst the gates
Of this foul den. Then tremble, Barbarossa !

Sel. Oh, how the approach of this great hour
Fires all my soul ! But, valiant friends, I charge you,
Reserve the murd'rer to my just revenge ;
My poignard claims his blood.

Oth. Forgive me, Prince !

Forgive my doubts !—Think—shou'd the fair Irene—

Sel. Thy doubts are vain. I wou'd not spare the
tyrant,

Tho' the sweet maid lay weeping at my feet !
Nay, shou'd he fall by any hand but mine,
By heav'n, I'd think my honour'd father's blood
Scarce half reveng'd ! My love indeed is strong !
But love shall yield to justice !

Sa. Gallant Prince !

Bravely resolv'd !

Sel. But is the city quiet ?

Sa. All, all is hush'd. Throughout the empty streets,
Nor voice, nor sound. As if th' inhabitants,
Like the presaging herd that seek the covert
Ere the loud thunder rolls, had inly felt
And shunn'd th' impending uproar.

Oth. There is a solemn horror in the night too,
That pleases me : A general pause thro' nature :
The winds are hush'd—

Sa. And as I pass'd the beach,
The lazy billow scarce cou'd lash the shore :
No star peeps thro' the firmament of heav'n—

Sel. And lo—where eastward, o'er the fullen wave,
The waning moon, depriv'd of half her orb,
Rises in blood : Her beam, well-nigh extinct,
Faintly contends with darkness—

[*Bell tolls.*

ark !—what meant

at tolling bell ?

Oth. It rings the midnight watch.

Sa. This was the signal—

me, Othman, we are call'd : The passing minutes
hide our delay : Brave Othman, let us hence.

Sel.

Sel. One last embrace!—nor doubt, but crown'd with glory,
 We soon shall meet again. But oh, remember,—
 Amid' the tumult's rage, remember mercy!
 Stain not a righteous cause with guiltless blood!
 Warn our brave friends, that we unsheath the sword,
 Not to destroy, but save! Nor let blind zeal,
 Or wanton cruelty, e'er turn its edge
 On age or innocence! or bid us stab,
 Where the most pitying angel in the skies,
 That now looks on us from his blest abode,
 Wou'd wish that we should spare.

Oth. So may we prosper,
 As mercy shall direct us!

Sel. Farewell, friends!

Sa. Intrepid Prince, farewell! [*Exe. Oth. and Sadi.*]

Sel. Now sleep and silence
 Brood o'er the city.—The devoted centinel
 Now takes his lonely stand; and idly dreams,
 Of that to-morrow, which shall never come!
 In this dread interval, O busy thought,
 From outward things descend into thyself!
 Search deep my heart! Bring with thee awful conscience,
 And firm resolve! That in th' approaching hour
 Of blood and horror, I may stand unmov'd;
 Nor fear to strike where justice calls, nor dare
 To strike where she forbids!—Why bear I then
 This dark, insidious dagger?—'Tis the badge
 Of vile assassins; of the coward hand
 That dares not meet its foe—Detested thought!
 Yet,—as foul lust and murder, tho' on thrones
 Triumphant, still retain their hell-born quality;
 So justice, groaning beneath countless wrongs,
 Quits not her spotless and celestial nature;
 But in th' unhallow'd murderer's disguise,
 Can sanctify this steel!
 Then, be it so!—Witness, ye pow'rs of heav'n,
 That not from you, but from the murd'rer's eye,
 I wrap myself in night!—To you I stand
 Reveal'd in noon-tide day!—Oh, cou'd I arm
 My hand with war! Then, like to you, array'd
 In storm and fire, my swift-avenging thunder

Shou'd

Shou'd blast this tyrant. But since fate denies
That privilege, I'll seize on what it gives :
Like the deep-cavern'd earthquake, burst beneath him,
And whelm his throne, his empire, and himself,
In one prodigious ruin !

A C T I V.

Enter IRENE and ALADIN.

IRENE.

BUT didst thou tell him, Aladin, my fears
Brook no delay ?

Ala. I did.

Ire. Why comes he not !

Oh, what a dreadful dream !—'Twas surely more
Than troubled fancy : Never was my soul
Shook with such hideous phantoms !—Still he lingers !
Return, return : And tell him that his daughter
Dies, till she warn him of his threatening ruin.

Ala. Behold, he comes. *[Exit Aladin.]*

Enter BARBAROSSA.

Bar. Thou bane of all my joys !
Some gloomy planet surely rul'd thy birth !
Ev'n now thy ill-tim'd fear suspends the banquet,
And damps the festal hour.

Ire. Forgive my fear !

Bar. What fear, what phantom hath possess'd thy brain ?

Ire. Oh, guard thee from the terrors of this night ;
For terrors lurk unseen.

Bar. What terror ? speak.

Wou'dst thou unman me into female weakness ?—
Say, what thou dread'st, and why ? I have a soul
To meet the blackest dangers undismay'd.

Ire. Let not my father check, with stern rebuke,
The warning voice of nature. For even now,
Retir'd to rest, soon as I clos'd mine eyes,
A horrid vision rose—Methought I saw
Young Selim rising from the silent tomb :
Mangled and bloody was his corse : His hair

Clotted

Clotted with gore; his glaring eyes on fire!
 Dreadful he shook a dagger in his hand.
 By some mysterious pow'r he rose in air.
 When lo—at his command, this yawning roof
 Was cleft in twain, and gave the phantom entrance!
 Swift he descended with terrific brow,
 Rush'd on my guardless father at the banquet,
 And plung'd his furious dagger in thy breast!

Bar. Wouldst thou appal me by a brain-sick vision?
 Get thee to rest.—Sleep but as sound till morn,
 As Selim in his grave shall sleep for ever,
 And then no haggard dreams shall ride thy fancy!

Ire. Yet hear me, dearest father!

Bar. To the couch!

Provoke me not.—

Ire. What shall I say to move him!
 Merciful heav'n, instruct me what to do! [Aside.]

Enter ALADIN.

Bar. What mean thy looks!—why dost thou gaze so wildly?

Ala. I hasted to inform thee, that ev'n now,
 Rounding the watch, I met the brave Abdalla,
 Breathless with tidings of a rumour dark,
 Which runs throughout the city, that young Selim
 Is yet alive—

Bar. May plagues consume the tongue
 That broach'd the falsehood!—'Tis not possible—
 What did he tell thee further?

Ala. More he said not:
 Save only, that the spreading rumour wak'd
 A spirit of revolt.

Ire. O gracious father!—

Bar. The rumour lies.—And, yet, your coward fears
 Infect me!—What!—shall I be terrify'd
 By midnight visions?—Can the troubled brain
 Of sleep out-stretch the reason's waking eye?
 I'll not believe it.

Ala. But this gath'ring rumour—
 Think but on that, my Lord!

Bar. Infernal darkness
 Swallow the slave that rais'd it!—Yet, I'll do

What caution dictates.—Hark thee, Aladin——
 Slave, hear my will.—See that the watch be doubled—
 Seek out this stranger, Achmet; and forthwith
 Let him be brought before me.

Ire. O my father!

I do conjure thee, as thou lov'st thy life,
 Retire, and trust thee to thy faithful guards—
 See not this Achmet!

Bar. Not see him?—Death and torment!—
 Think'st thou, I fear a single arm that's mortal?
 Not see him?—Forthwith bring the slave before me.—
 If he prove false—if hated Selim live,
 I'll heap such vengeance on him——

Ire. Mercy! Mercy!

Bar. Mercy!—To whom?

Ire. To me:—and to thyself:
 To him—to all.—Thou think'st I rave; yet true
 My visions are, as ever prophet utter'd,
 When heav'n inspires his tongue!

Bar. Ne'er did the moon-struck madman rave with
 dreams

More wild than thine!—Get thee to rest; e'er yet
 Thy folly wake my rage.—Call Achmet hither.

Ire. Thus prostrate on my knees!—O see him not.
 Selim is dead:—Indeed the rumour lies!—
 There is no danger near:—Or, if there be,
 Achmet is innocent!

Bar. Off, frantic wretch!
 This idiot-dream hath turn'd her brain to madness!
 Hence—to thy chamber, till returning reason
 Hath calm'd this tempest.—On thy duty, hence!

Ire. Yet hear the voice of caution!—Cruel fate!
 What have I done!—Heav'n shield my dearest father!
 Heav'n shield the innocent!—Undone Irene!
 Whate'er the event, thy doom is misery. [*Exit Irene.*]

Bar. Her words are wrapt in darkness.—Aladin,
 Forthwith send Achmet hither.—Mark him well.—
 His countenance and gesture—Then with speed,
 Double the centinels. [*Exit Aladin.*]
 Infernal guilt!

How dost thou rise in ev'ry hideous shape,
 Of rage and doubt, suspicion and despair,

To rend my soul ! more wretched far than they.
 Made wretched by my crimes !——Why did I not
 Repent, while yet my crimes were delible ;
 Ere they had struck their colours thro' my soul,
 As black as night or hell !——'tis now too late !——
 Hence then, ye vain repinings !——Take me all,
 Unfeeling guilt ! O banish, if thou canst,
 This fell remorse, and ev'ry fruitless fear !
 Be this my glory—to be great in evil !
 To combat my own heart, and, scorning conscience,
 Rise to exalted crimes !

Enter SELIM.

Come hither, slave :—

Hear me, and tremble :—Art thou what thou seem'st ?

Sel. Ha !——

Bar. Dost thou pause ?——By hell, the slave's confounded !

Sel. That Barbarossa shou'd suspect my truth !

Bar. Take heed ! for by the hov'ring pow'rs of vengeance,

If I do find thee treach'rous, I will doom thee
 To death and torment, such as human thought
 Ne'er yet conceiv'd ! thou com'st beneath the guise
 Of Selim's murderer.——Now tell me :——Is not
 That Selim yet alive ?

Sel. Selim alive !

Bar. Perdition on thee ! Dost thou echo me ?
 Answer me quick, or die ! *[Draws his dagger.]*

Sel. Yes, freely strike——

Already hast thou giv'n the fatal wound,
 And pierc'd my heart with thy unkind suspicion.
 Oh, cou'd my dagger find a tongue, to tell
 How deep it drank his blood !——But since thy doubt
 Thus wrongs my zeal——Behold my breast——strike here——
 For bold is innocence.

Bar. I scorn the talk. *[Puts up his dagger.]*
 Time shall decide thy doom.——Guards, mark me well ;
 See that ye watch the motions of this slave :
 And if he meditates t'escape your eye,
 Let your good sabres cleave him to the chine.

Sel. I yield me to thy will, and when thou know'st
That

That Selim lives, or see'st his hated face,
Then wreak thy vengeance on me.

Bar. Bear him hence.——

Yet, on your lives, await me within call.——
I will have deeper inquisition made :
Haply some witness may confront the slave,
And drag to light his falsehood.

[*Exeunt Selim and Guards.*

Call Zaphira !

[*Exit a Slave.*

If Selim lives—then what is Barbarossa ?
My throne's a bubble, that but floats in air,
Till marriage-rites declare Zaphira mine.
Fool that I am ! To wait the weak effects
Of slow persuasion ; when unbounded pow'r
Can give me all I wish !——Slave, hear my will——
Fly—bid the priest prepare the marriage rites :
Let incense rise to heav'n ; and choral songs
Attend Zaphira to the nuptial bed. [*Exit Slave.*
I will not brook delay.——By love and vengeance,
This hour decides her fate !

Enter ZAPHIRA.

Well, haughty fair !——
Hath reason yet subdu'd thee ? Wilt thou hear
The voice of love ?

Zaph. Why dost thou vainly urge me !
Thou know'st my fix'd resolve.

Bar. Can aught but phrenzy
Rush on perdition ?

Zaph. Therefore shall no pow'r
E'er make me thine.

Bar. Nay, sport not with my rage :
Tho' yon suspected slave affirms him dead ;
Yet rumour whispers, that young Selim lives.

Zaph. Cou'd I but think him so ! my earnest pray'r
Shou'd rise to heav'n, to keep him far from thee !

Bar. Therefore, lest treach'ry undermine my pow'r,
Know, that thy final hour of choice is come !

Zaph. I have no choice.—Think'st thou I e'er will wed
The murderer of my Lord ?

Bar. Take heed, rash Queen !
Tell me thy last resolve.

Zaph. Then hear me, heav'n !
 Hear all ye pow'rs that watch o'er innocence !
 Angels of light ! and thou, dear honour'd shade
 Of my departed lord ! attend, while here
 I ratify with vows my last resolve !
 If e'er I wed this tyrant murderer,
 If I pollute me with this horrid union,
 Black as adultery or damned incest,
 May ye, the ministers of heav'n, depart,
 Nor shed your influence on the guilty scene !—
 May horror blacken all our days and nights !
 May discord light the nuptial torch ! and, rising
 From hell, may swarming fiends in triumph howl
 Around th' accursed bed !

Bar. Begone, remorse !—
 Guards do your office : drag her to the altar.
 Heed not her tears or cries.—What !—dare ye doubt ?
 Instant obey my bidding ;—or, by hell,
 Torment and death shall overtake you all !

[*Guards go to seize Zaphira.*]

Zaph. O spare me !—Heav'n protect me !—O my son,
 Wert thou but here, to save thy helpless mother !—
 What shall I do !—Undone, undone Zaphira !

Enter SELIM.

Sel. Who call'd on Achmet ?—Did not Barbarossa
 Require me here ?

Bar. Officious slave, retire !
 I call'd thee not.

Zaph. O, kind and gen'rous stranger, lend thy aid !
 O, rescue me from these impending horrors !
 Heav'n will reward thy pity !

Bar. Drag her hence !

Sel. Pity her woes, O mighty Barbarossa !

Bar. Rouse not my vengeance, slave !

Sel. Oh, hear me, hear me !

[*Kneels.*]

Bar. Curse on thy forward zeal !—

Sel. Yet, yet have mercy !

[*Lays hold of Barbarossa's garment.*]

Bar. Presuming slave, begone !

[*Strikes Selim.*]

Sel.

Sel. Nay, then——die, tyrant.

[Rises, and aims to stab Barbarossa.

[Barbarossa wrests his dagger from him.

Bar. Ah, traitor, have I caught thee?—Hold,—forbear— [To Guards, who offer to kill Selim.

Kill him not yet—I will have greater vengeance.——

Perfidious wretch, who art thou?—Bring the rack :

Let that extort the secrets of his heart.

Sel. Thy impious threats are lost ! I know that death
And torments are my doom.——Yet, ere I die,
I'll strike thy soul with horror.——Off, vile habit !——

Let me emerge from this dark cloud that hides me,
And make my setting glorious !—If thou dar'st,
Now view me !—Hear me, tyrant !—while with voice
More dreadful than of thunder, I proclaim,
That he who aim'd the dagger at thy heart,
Is Selim !

Zaph. O heav'n ! my son ! my son ! [She faints.

Sel. Unhappy mother ! [Runs to embrace her.

Bar. Tear them asunder. [Guards separate them.

Sel. Barb'rous, barb'rous ruffians !

Bar. Slaves, seize the traitor. [They offer to seize him.

Sel. Off, ye vile slaves ! I am your king !—Retire,
And tremble at my frowns ! That is the traitor ;
That is the murd'rer, tyrant, ravisher : Seize him,
And do your country right !

Bar. Ah, coward dogs !
Start ye at words !—or seize him, or, by hell,
This dagger ends you all ! [They seize him.

Sel. 'Tis done !—Dost thou revive, unhappy Queen !
Now arm my soul with patience !

Zaph. My dear son !
Do I then live, once more to see my Selim !
But oh——to see thee thus ! [Weeping.

Sel. Canst thou behold
Her speechless agonies, and not relent !

Bar. At length revenge is mine !—Slaves, force her
hence !

This hour shall crown my love.

Zaph. O, Mercy ! Mercy !

Sel. Lo ! Barbarossa ! thou at length hast conquer'd !
Behold a hapless prince, overwhelm'd with woes, [Kneels.

Prostrate before thy feet!—Not for myself
 I plead!—Yes, plunge the dagger in my breast!
 Tear, tear me piece-meal! But, O spare Zaphira!
 Yet, yet, relent! force not her matron honour!
 Reproach not heav'n—

Bar. Have I then bent thy pride?
 Why, this is conquest ev'n beyond my hope!—
 Lie there, thou slave! lie, till Zaphira's cries
 Arouse thee from thy posture!

Sel. Dost thou insult my griefs?—unmanly wretch!—
 Curse on the fear that cou'd betray my limbs, [*Rising.*
 My coward limbs, to this dishonest posture!
 Long have I scorn'd, I now defy thy pow'r.

Bar. I'll put thy boasted virtue to the trial—
 Slaves, bear him to the rack

Zaph. O, spare my son!
 Sure filial virtue never was a crime!
 Save but my son!—I yield me to thy wish!—
 What do I say!—The marriage vow—O, horror!
 This hour shall make me thine!—

Sel. What! doom thyself
 The guilty partner of a murderer's bed,
 Whose hands yet reek with thy dear husband's blood!—
 To be the mother of destructive tyrants,
 The curses of mankind!—By heav'n, I swear,
 The guilty hour that gives thee to the arms
 Of that detested murderer, shall end
 This hated life!—

Bar. Or yield thee, or he dies!—

Zaph. The conflict's past.—I will resume my greatness:
 We'll bravely die, as we have liv'd, with honour!
 [*Embracing.*

Sel. Now, tyrant, pour thy fiercest fury on us:—
 Now see, despairing guilt! that virtue still
 Shall conquer, tho' in ruin.

Bar. Drag them hence:
 Her to the altar; Selim to his fate.

Zaph. O Selim! O my son!—Thy doom is death!
 Wou'd it were mine!

Sel. Wou'd I cou'd give it thee!
 Is there no means to save her! Lend, ye guards,
 Ye ministers of death, in pity lend

Your swords, or some kind weapon of destruction! —
 Sure the most mournful boon, that ever son
 Ask'd for the best of mothers!

Zaph. Dearest Selim!

Bar. I'll hear no more.—*Guards*, bear them to their
 fate. [*Guards seize them.*]

Sel. One last embrace!

Farewell! farewell for ever! [*Guards struggle with them.*]

Zaph. One moment yet!—Pity a mother's pangs! —
 O Selim!

Sel. O my mother! [*Exeunt Selim and Zaphira.*]

Bar. My dearest hopes are blasted!—What is pow'r;
 If stubborn virtue thus out-soar its flight!
 Yet he shall die—and she——

Enter ALADIN.

Ala. Heav'n guard my Lord!

Bar. What mean'st thou, Aladin?

Ala. A slave arriv'd,
 Says that young Selim lives: nay, somewhere lurks
 Within these walls.

Bar. The lurking traitor's found,
 Convicted, and disarm'd.—Ev'n now he aim'd
 This dagger at my heart.

Ala. Audacious traitor!
 The slave says farther, that he brings the tidings
 Of dark conspiracy, now hov'ring o'er us:
 And claims thy private ear.

Bar. Of dark conspiracy?
 Where?—Among whom?

Ala. The secret friends of Selim,
 Who nightly haunt the city.

Bar. Curse the traitors!
 Now speed thee, Aladin.—Send forth our spies:
 Explore their haunts. For, by th' infernal pow'rs!
 I will let loose my rage.—The furious lion
 Now foams indignant, scorning tears and cries.
 Let Selim forthwith die.—Come, mighty vengeance!
 Stir me to cruelty! The rack shall groan
 With new-born horrors!—I will issue forth,
 Like midnight-pestilence! My breath shall strew
 The streets with dead; and havock stalk in gore.

Hence,

Hence, pity!—Feed the milky thought of babes,
Mine is of bloodier hue.

A C T V.

Enter BARBAROSSA and ALADIN.

BARBAROSSA.

IS the watch doubled? Are the gates secur'd
Against surprise?

Ala. They are, and mock th' attempt
Of force or treachery.

Bar. This whisper'd rumour
Of dark conspiracy, on further inquest,
Seems but a false alarm. Our spies, sent out,
And now return from search, affirm that sleep
Has wrapp'd the city.

Ala. But while Selim lives,
Destruction lurks within the palace walls;
Nor bars, nor centinels can give us safety.

Bar. Right, Aladin. His hour of fate approaches.
How goes the night?

Ala. The second watch is near.

Bar. 'Tis well:—Whene'er it rings, the traitor dies.
So hath my will ordain'd.—I'll seize th' occasion,
While I may fairly plead my life's defence.

Ala. True: for he aim'd his dagger at thy heart.

Bar. He did. Hence justice, uncompell'd, shall seem
To lend her sword, and do ambition's work.

Ala. His bold resolves have steel'd Zaphira's breast
Against thy love: thence he deserves to die.

Bar. And death's his doom—Yet first the rack shall
rend

Each secret from his heart; unless he give
Zaphira to my arms, by marriage-vows,
With full consent; ere yet the second watch
Toll for his death.—Curse on this woman's weakness!
I yet wou'd win her love! Haste, seek out Othman:
Go, tell him, that destruction and the sword
Hang o'er young Selim's head, if swift compliance
Plead not his pardon.

[Exit Aladin.
Stubborn

Stubborn fortitude !

Had he not interpos'd, success had crown'd

My love, now hopeless.—Then let vengeance seize him.

Enter IRENE.

Ire. O night of horror !—Hear me, honour'd father !

If e'er Irene's peace was dear to thee,

Now hear me !

Bar. Impious ! Dar'st thou disobey ?

Did not my sacred will ordain thee hence ?

Get thee to rest ; for death is stirring here.

Ire. O fatal words ! By ev'ry sacred tie,

Recal the dire decree.—

Bar. What wou'dst thou say ?

Whom plead for ?

Ire. For a brave, unhappy Prince,
Sentenc'd to die.

Bar. And justly !—But this hour
The traitor half fulfill'd thy dream, and aim'd
His dagger at my heart.

Ire. Might pity plead ?

Bar. What ! plead for treachery ?

Ire. Yet pity might bestow a milder name.
Wou'dst thou not love the child, whose fortitude
Shou'd hazard life for thee ?—Oh, think on that :—
The noble mind hates not a virtuous foe :
His gen'rous purpose was to save a mother !

Bar. Damn'd was his purpose : And accurst art thou,
Whose perfidy wou'd save the dark assassin,
Who sought thy father's life !—Hence, from my sight.

Ire. Oh, never, till thy mercy spare my Selim !

Bar. Thy Selim ?—Thine ?

Ire. Thou know'st—by gratitude
He's mine.—Had not his generous hand redeem'd me,
What then had been Irene ?

Bar. Faithless wretch !
Unhappy father ! whose perfidious child
Leagues with his deadliest foe ; and guides the dagger
Ev'n to his heart !—Perdition catch thy falsehood !
And is it thus, a thankless child repays me,
For all the guilt in which I plung'd my soul,
To raise her to a throne ?

Ire.

Ire. O spare these words,
More keen than daggers to my bleeding heart !
Let me not live suspected ! —Dearest father ! —
Behold my breast ! write thy suspicion here :
Write them in blood ; but spare the gen'rous youth,
Who sav'd me from dishonour !

Bar. By the pow'rs
Of great revenge : Thy fond intreaties seal
His instant death.—In him, I'll punish thee.—
Away !

Ire. Yet hear me ! Ere my tortur'd soul
Rush on some deed of horror !

Bar. Seize her guards—
Convey the frantic ideot from my presence :
See that she do no violence on herself.

Ire. O Selim !—generous youth !—how have my fears
Betray'd thee to destruction !—Slaves, unhand me ! —
Think ye, I'll live to bear these pangs of grief,
These horrors that oppress my tortur'd soul ?—
Inhuman father !—Generous, injur'd youth !
Methinks I see thee stretch'd upon the rack,
Hear thy expiring groans :—Oh, Horror ! Horror !
What shall I do to save him !—Vain, alas !
Vain are my tears and pray'rs—At least, I'll die.
Death shall unite us yet ! [Exit Irene and Guards.

Bar. O torment ! torment !
Ev'n in the mid'st of pow'r !—the vilest slave's
More happy far than I !—The very child,
Whom my love cherish'd from her infant years,
Conspires to blast my peace !—O, false ambition,
Thou lying phantom ! whither hast thou lur'd me !
Ev'n to this giddy height ; where now I stand,
Forfaken, comfortless ! with not a friend
In whom my soul can trust !

Enter ALADIN.

Hast thou seen Othman ?
He will not, sure, conspire against my peace ?

Ala. He's fled, my Lord. I dread some lurking ruin,
The centinel on watch says, that he pass'd
The gate, since midnight, with an unknown friend :

And

And, as they pass'd, Othman in whispers said,
 " Now, farewell, bloody tyrant."

Bar. Slave, thou ly'st.

He did not dare to say it ; or, if he did,
 Pernicious slave, why dost thou wound my ear
 By the foul repetition ?—Gracious pow'rs,
 Let me be calm !—O, my distracted soul !
 How am I rent in pieces !—Othman fled !—
 Why then may all hell's curses follow him !
 What's to be done ? some mischief lurks unseen.

Ala. Prevent it then—

Bar. By Selim's instant death—

Ala. Aye, doubtless.

Bar. Is the rack prepar'd ?

Ala. 'Tis ready.

Along the ground he lies, o'erwhelm'd with chains.
 The ministers of death stand round ; and wait
 Thy last command.

Bar. Once more I'll try to bend
 His stubborn soul.—Conduct me forthwith to him :
 And if he now disdain my proffer'd kindness,
 Destruction swallows him !

[*Exeunt.*

SELIM *discover'd in Chains, Executioners, Officer, &c.*
and Rack.

Sel. I pray you, friends,
 When I am dead, let not indignity
 Insult these poor remains ; see them interr'd
 Close by my father's tomb ! I ask no more.

Off. They shall.

Sel. How goes the night ?

Off. Thy hour of fate,
 The second watch, is near.

Sel. Let it come on ;
 I am prepar'd.

Enter BARBAROSSA.

Bar. So—raise him from the ground.— [*They raise him.*
 Perfidious boy ! Behold the just rewards
 Of guilt and treachery !—Didst thou not give
 Thy forfeit life, whene'er I should behold
 Selim's detested face ?

Sel.

Sel. Then take it, tyrant.

Bar. Did'st thou not aim a dagger at my heart?

Sel. I did.

Bar. Yet heav'n defeated thy intent ;
And sav'd me from the dagger.

Sel. 'Tis not ours

To question heav'n. Th' intent, and not the deed,
Is in our pow'r : and therefore, who dares greatly,
Does greatly.

Bar. Yet bethink thee, stubborn boy,
What horrors now surround thee—

Sel. Think'st thou, tyrant,
I came so ill prepar'd?—Thy rage is weak ;
Thy torments pow'rless o'er the steady mind :
He who cou'd bravely dare, can bravely suffer.

Bar. Yet, lo, I come, by pity led, to spare thee.
Relent, and save Zaphira!—For the bell
Ev'n now, expects the centinel, to toll
The signal of thy death.

Sel. Let guilt like thine
Tremble at death : I scorn his darkest frown.
Hence, tyrant, nor profane my dying hour !

Bar. Then take thy wish. [Bell tolls.]
There goes the fatal knell.
Thy fate is seal'd.—Not all thy mother's tears,
Nor pray'rs, nor eloquence of grief, shall save thee
From instant death. Yet, ere th' assassin die,
Let torment wing each secret from his heart.
The traitor Othman's fled ;—Conspiracy
Lurks in the womb of night, and threatens ruin.
Spare not the rack, nor cease, till it extort
The lurking treason ; and this murd'rer call
On death to end his woes. [Exit Barbarossa.]

Sel. Come on then. [They bind him.]
Begin the work of death—what ! bound with cords,
Like a vile criminal !—O, valiant friends,
When will ye give me vengeance !

Enter IRENE.

Ire. Stop, O stop !
Hold your accursed hands !—On me, on me
Pour all your torments ;—How shall I approach thee !

Sel. These are thy father's gifts!—Yet thou art guiltless;
Then let me take thee to my heart, thou best,
Most amiable of women!

Ire. Rather curse me,
As the betrayer of thy virtue!

Sel. Ah!

Ire. 'Twas I—my fears, my frantic fears betray'd thee.
Thus falling at thy feet; may I but hope
For pardon ere I die!

Sel. Hence, to thy father!

Ire. Never, O never!—Crawling in the dust,
I'll clasp thy feet, and bathe them with my tears;
Tread me to earth! I never will complain;
But my last breath shall bless thee.

Sel. Lov'd Irene!
What hath my fury done?

Ire. Indeed, 'twas hard!
But I was born to sorrow.

Sel. Melt me not.
I cannot bear thy tears;—they quite unman me!
Forgive the transports of my rage!

Ire. Alas!
The guilt is mine:—Canst thou forgive those fears
That first awak'd suspicion in my father.
Those fears that have undone thee!—Heav'n is witness,
They meant not ill to thee!

Sel. None; none, Irene!
No; 'twas the generous voice of filial love;
That, only, prompted thee to save a father.
Yes; from my inmost soul I do approve
That virtue which destroys me.

Ire. Canst thou, then,
Forgive and pity me?

Sel. I do—I do.

Ire. On my knees,
Thus let me thank thee, generous, injur'd prince!—
earth and heav'n! that such unequal'd worth
u'd meet so hard a fate!—that I—that I—
om his love rescu'd from the depth of woe,
u'd be th' accurs'd destroyer!—Strike, in pity;
d end this hated life!

Sel. Cease, dear Irene.

Submit to heav'n's high will.—I charge thee live ;
And to thy utmost power, protect from wrong
My helpless, friendless mother !

Ire. With my life
I'll shield her from each wrong.—That hope alone
Can tempt me to prolong a life of woe !

Sel. O my ungovern'd rage !——To frown on thee !
Thus let me expiate the cruel wrong, [*Embracing.*
And mingle rapture with the pains of death !

Offi. No more.—Prepare the rack.

Ire. Stand off, ye fiends !
Here will I cling. No pow'r on earth shall part us,
Till I have sav'd my Selim ! [*A noise.*

Offi. Hark ! what noise
Strikes on mine ear ? [*A noise.*

Sel. Again !

Ala. Without.] Arm, arm !—treach'ry and murder !
[*Executioners go to seize Selim.*

Sel. Off slaves !——Or I will turn my chains to arms,
And dash you piece-meal !—for I have heard a sound
Which lifts my tow'ring soul to Atlas' height,
That I cou'd prop the skies !

Ala. Where is the king ?
The foe pours in. The palace gates are burst :
The centinels are murder'd ! Save the king !
They seek him through the palace.

Offi. Death and ruin !
Follow me, slayes, and save him.

[*Exeunt Officer and Executioner.*

Sel. Now, bloody tyrant ! Now, thy hour is come.

Ire. What means yon mad'ning tumult ?——O, my
fears !——

Sel. Vengeance at length hath pierc'd these guilty walls,
And walks her deadly round.

Ire. Whom dost thou mean ? my father !

Sel. Yes : thy father !
Who murder'd mine.

Ire. Is there no room for mercy ?
• O Selim ; by our love !——

Sel. Thy tears are vain ;
Vain were thy eloquence, though thou didst plead
With an archangel's tongue.

Ire.

Ire. Spare but his life !

Sel. Heav'n knows I pity thee. But he must bleed ;
Tho' my own life-blood ; nay, tho' thinē, more dear,
Shou'd issue at the wound !

Ire. Must he then die ?

Let me but see my father, ere he perish !

Let me but pay my parting duty to him !—

[*Clash of Swords.*

Hark !—'twas the clash of swords ! Heav'n save my father ?

O cruel, cruel Selim !

[*Exit Irene.*

Sel. Curse on this servile chain, that binds me fast,

In pow'rless ignominy ; while my sword

Shou'd haunt its prey, and cleave the tyrant down !

Oth. [*without*] Where is the Prince !

Sel. Here, Othman, bound to earth !—

Set me but free !—O cursed, cursed chain !

Enter OTHMAN and Party, who free SELIM.

Oth. O, my brave Prince !—Heav'n favours our design.

[*Embraces him.*

Take that :—I need not bid thee use it nobly.

[*Giving him a Sword.*

Sel. Now, Barbarossa, let my arm meet thine :

'Tis all I ask of heav'n !

[*Exit Selim.*

Oth. Guard ye the Prince—

[*Part go out.*

Pursue his steps—Now, this way let us turn,

And seek the tyrant.

[*Exeunt Othman, &c.*

SCENE changes to the open Palace.

Enter BARBAROSSA.

Bar. Empire is lost, and life : Yet brave revenge
Shall close my life in glory.

Enter OTHMAN.

Have I found thee,
Dissembling traitor ?—Die !—

Oth. Long hath my wish,
Pent in my struggling breast, been robb'd of utterance.

Now valour scorns the mask.—I dare thee, tyrant !

And, arm'd with justice, thus wou'd meet thy rage,

Tho' thy red right hand grasp'd the pointed thunder !

Now heav'n decide between us!

[*They fight.*

Bar. Coward!

Oth. Tyrant!

Bar. Traitor!

Oth. Infernal fiend, thy words are fraught with falsehood:

To combat crimes like thine, by force or wiles,

Is equal glory.

[*Barbarossa falls.*

Bar. I faint! I die!—O horror!

Enter SELIM and SADI.

Sel. The foe gives way: sure this way went the storm.
Where is the tyger fled!—What do I see!

Sa. Algiers is free!

Oth. This fabre did the deed!

Sel. I envy thee the blow!—Yet valour scoras
To wound the fallen.—But if life remain,
I will speak daggers to his guilty soul!—
Hoe! Barbarossa! tyrant! murderer!

'Tis Selim, Selim calls thee!

Bar. Off, ye fiends!

Torment me not!—O, Selim, art thou there!—
Swallow me earth! Bury me deep, ye mountains!
Accursed be the day that gave me birth!
Oh, that I ne'er had wrong'd thee!

Sel. Dost thou then

Repent thee of thy crimes!—He does! He does!
He grasps my hand! See, the repentant tear
Starts from his eye!—Dost thou indeed repent!—
Why then I do forgive thee: from my soul
I freely do forgive thee!—And if crimes
Abhor'd as thine, dare plead to heav'n for mercy—
May heav'n have mercy on thee!

Bar. Gen'rous Selim!

Too good—I have a daughter! Oh, protect her!
Let not my crimes!—

[*Dies.*

Oth. There fled the guilty soul!

Sel. Haste to the city—stop the rage of slaughter.
Tell my brave people, that Algiers is free;
And tyranny no more.

[*Exeunt Slaves.*

Sa. And, to confirm
The glorious tidings, soon as morning shines,

Be his dead carcase dragg'd throughout the city,
A spectacle of horror.

Sel. Curb thy zeal.

Let us be brave, not cruel : nor disgrace
Valour, by barb'rous and inhuman deeds.
Black was his guilt : and he hath paid his life,
The forfeit of his crimes. Then sheath the sword :
Let vengeance die——justice is satisfy'd!

Enter ZAPHIRA.

Zaph. What mean these horrors?—wherefoe'er I turn
My trembling steps, I find some dying wretch,
Wet'ring in gore!—and dost thou live, my *Selim*.

Sel. Lo, there he lies!

Zaph. The bloody tyrant slain!
O righteous heav'n!

Sel. Behold thy valiant friends,
Whose faith and courage have o'erwhelm'd the pow'r
Of Barbarossa. Here, once more, thy virtues
Shall dignify the throne, and bless thy people.

Zaph. Just are thy ways, O heav'n!—— Vain terrors
hence!

Once more *Zaphira's* blest;— my virtuous son,
How shall I e'er requite thy boundless love?
Thus let me snatch thee to my longing arms,
And on thy bosom weep my griefs away!

Sel. O happy hour!—happy, beyond the flight
Ev'n of my ardent hope.—— Look down, blest shade,
From the bright realms of bliss. —— Behold thy Queen
Unspotted, uneduc'd, unmov'd in virtue.
Behold the tyrant prostrate at my feet!
And, to the mem'ry of thy bleeding wrongs,
Accept this sacrifice!

Zaph. My generous *Selim*!

Sel. Where is *Irene*?

Sa. With looks of wildness, and distracted mein,
She sought her father where the tumult rag'd;
She pass'd me, while the coward *Aladin*
Fled from my sword : and, as I cleft him down,
She fainted at the sight.

Oth. But straight recover'd;
Zamor, our trusty friend, at my command,

Convey'd

Convey'd the weeping fair-one to her chamber.

Sel. Thanks to thy generous care :—Come, let us seek
Th' afflicted maid.

Zaph. Her virtues might atone
For all her father's guilt !—Thy throne be hers :
She merits all thy love.

Sel. Then haste, and find her.—O'er her father's
crimes

Pity shall draw her veil ; nay, half absolve them,
When she beholds the virtues of his child !—
Now let us thank th' eternal pow'r : convinc'd,
That heav'n but tries our virtue by affliction :
That oft' the cloud which wraps the present hour,
Serves but to brighten all our future days !

EPILOGUE.

Written by Mr GARRICK.

Spoken by Mr WOODWARD, in the Character of a fine Gentleman.

Enter—Speaking to the People without.

PSHAW!—damn your Epilogue—and hold your tongue—
Shall we, of rank, be told what's right or wrong?
Had you ten epilogues you shou'd not speak 'em,
Tho' be had writ 'em all in linguum Græcum.
I'll do't by all the gods!—(you must excuse me)
Tho' author, actors, audience, all abuse me!

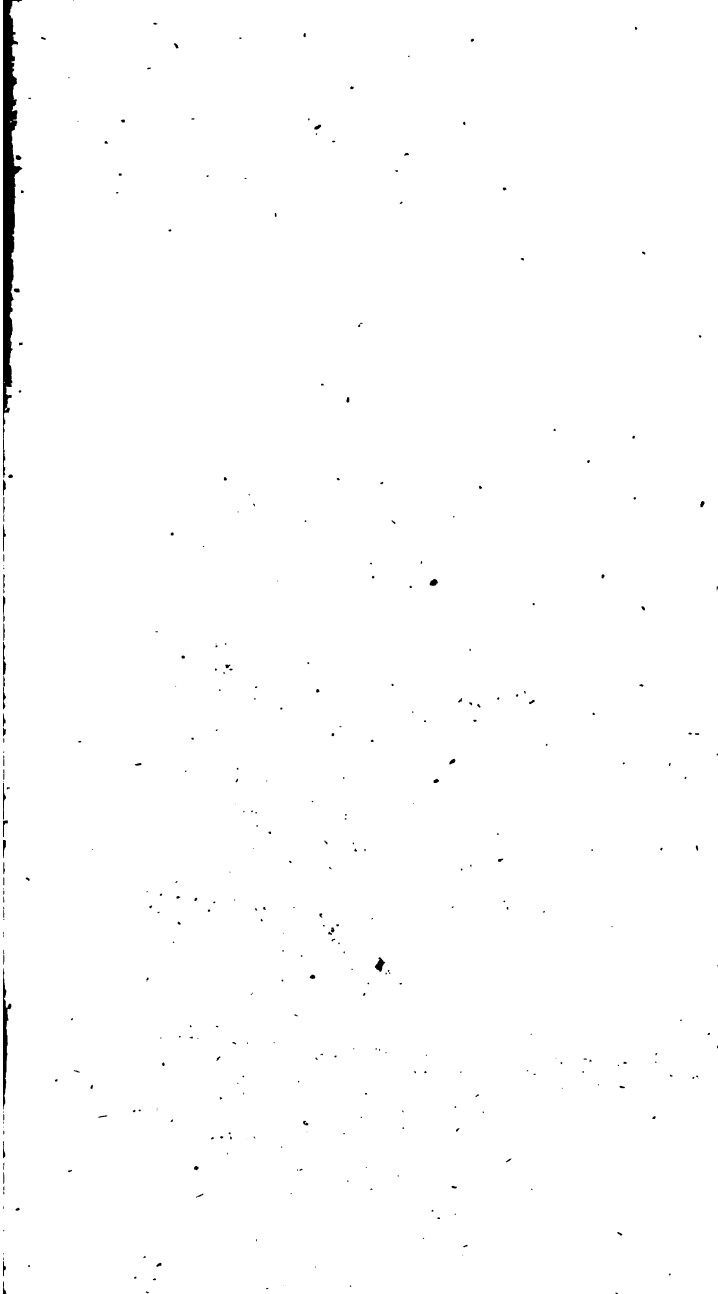
To the Audience.

Behold a gentleman!—and that's enough!—
Laugh if you please—I'll take a pinch of snuff!
I come to tell you—(let it not surprize you)
That I'm a wit—and worthy to advise you.—
How cou'd you suffer that same country booby,
That pro-logue speaking savage,—that great looby,
To talk his nonsense?—Give me leave to say,
'Twas low—damn'd low!—but save the fellow's play—
Let the poor devil eat—allow him that,
And give a meal to Measter, Mon, and Cat;
But why attack the fashions?—Senseless rogue!
We have no joys but what result from vogue:
The Mode shou'd all control—nay, ev'ry passion,
Sense, appetite, and all, give way to fashion:
I hate as much as he, a turtle-feast,
But, 'till the present turtle-rage has ceas'd,
I'd ride a hundred miles to make myself a beast.
I have no ears—yet op'ras I adore!—
Always prepar'd to die—to sleep—no more!
The ladies, too, were carp'd at, and their dress,
He wants 'em all ruff'd up like good Queen Bess!
They are, forsooth, too much expos'd, and free—
Were more expos'd, no ill effects I see,
For more, or less, 'tis all the same to me.

Poor

*Poor gaming, too, was maul'd among the rest,
That precious cordial to a high-life breast !
When thoughts arise I always game or drink,
An English gentleman shou'd never think—
The reason's plain, which ev'ry soul might hit on—
What trims a Frenchman, oversets a Briton ;
In us reflection breeds a sober sadness,
Which always ends in politicks or madness :
I therefore now propose—by your command,
That tragedies no more shall cloud this land ;
Send o'er your Shakespeares to the sons of France,
Let them grow grave—Let us begin to dance !
Banish your gloomy scenes to foreign climes,
Reserve alone to bless these golden times,
A farce or two—and Woodward's pantomimes !*







Roberts del.

Painted for the British Theatre March 2. 1777.

Thornthwaite Sculp.

MR. LEWIS in the Character of ZAMOR.

*Look on all; and recollect his face,
who, wisely spared thy Life, to spread thy Virtues.*

BELL'S EDITION.

V



A L Z I R A.

A TRAGEDY.

As written by AARON HILL.

1685-1752

DISTINGUISHING ALSO THE

VARIATIONS OF THE THEATRE,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden.

Regulated from the Prompt-Book,

By PERMISSION of the MANAGERS,

By Mr. WILD, Prompter.



L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN BELL, near Exeter-Exchange, in the Strand.

MDCCLXXVII.



To his Royal Highness

F R E D E R I C K

PRINCE OF

W A L E S.

S I R,

THOUGH a prince is born a patron, yet a benevolent expansion of his heart gives nobler title to the homage of the arts, than all the greatness of his power to propagate them. — There respect is, either way, so much your Royal Highness's unquestioned due, that he who asks your leave to offer such a duty, calls in question your prerogative, or means to sell his own acknowledgments.

They have not marked, with penetration, the distinction of your spirit, who dare look upon you as inclosed against the access of sincerity. The judgment and humanity of princes are obscured by difficulties in approaching them. Nor can the benefactors of mankind be so far inconsistent with themselves, as to interpose the obstacles of distance, or cold ceremony, between their goodness, and our gratitude.

Allow me, therefore, Sir, the honour to present Alira to your patronage: disclaiming, for myself, all expectation of your notice. It is just that I should give up my own small pretensions: but Mr. de Voltaire brings title to your Royal Highness's regard. The merit of his work

will recommend him to your judgment: and the noble justice he has done her Majesty's distinguished character, in his French preface to this tragedy, (himself mean while a foreigner, and writing in a foreign nation) will, perhaps, deserve the glory of the son's partiality, in sense of reverence for the royal mother.

It were indeed, some violation of respect and gratitude, not to devote Alzira to the hand that honoured her, in public, with an applause so warm and weighty, in her representation on the English theatre.—Here Mr. de Voltaire enjoyed the triumph due to genius; while his heroic characters at the same time, made evident the force of nature, when it operates upon resembling qualities.—When tragedies are strong in sentiment, they will be touchstones to their hearer's hearts. The narrow and inhumane will be unattentive, or unmoved; while princely spirits, like your Royal Highness's, (impelled by their own conscious tendency) shew us an example in their generous sensibility, how great thoughts should be received by those who can think greatly.

Yet, in one strange circumstance, Alzira suffered by the honour of your approbation; for while the audience hung their eyes upon your Royal Highness's discerning delicacy, their joy to see you warmed by, and applauding most, those sentiments which draw their force from love of pity, and of liberty, became the only passion they would feel; and thereby lessened their attention to the very scenes they owed it to.

Can it be possible, after so important a public declaration in honour of passion and sentiment, that this best use of the poet's art, should any longer continue to languish under general neglect, or indifference?—No, surely, Sir!—Your Royal Highness, but persisting to keep reason and nature in countenance at the theatres, will universally establish what you so generously and openly avow. For, if where men love, they will imitate, your example must be copied by millions; till the influence of your attraction shall have planted your taste; and overspread three kingdoms with laurels.

It may at present perhaps, be a fruitless, but it can never be an irrational wish, that a theatre entirely new, (if not rather the old ones new-modelled) professing only
what

what is serious and manly, and sacred to the interests of wisdom and virtue, might arise under some powerful and popular protection, such as that of your Royal Highness's distinguished countenance!—To what probable lengths of improvement would not such a spur provoke genius!—Or, should it fail to do that, it would make manifest, at least, that rather wit is wanting than encouragement; and that these opprobrious excrescences of our stage, which, under the disguise of entertainments, have defamed and insulted a people, had a meaner derivation, than from the hope of delighting our princes.

It has been a misfortune to poetry, in this nation, that it was too superciliously under-rated; and, to acknowledge truth on both sides, for the most part practised too lightly.—But by those who consider it according to the demands of its character, it will be found intitled, beyond many other arts, to the political affection of princes: being more persuasive in its nature than rhetoric; and more comprehensive and animating than history.—For while history but waits on fortune with a little too servile a restriction, poetry corrects and commands her:—because, rectifying the obliquity of natural events, by a more equitable formation of rational ones, the poet, as lord Bacon very finely and truly observes, instead of constraining the mind to successes, adapts and calls out events to the measures of reason and virtue; maintaining Providence triumphant against the oppositions of nature and accident.

And still more to distinguish his superiority over the gay prose-fabricks of imagination, the poet, as a reinforcement to his creative vivacity of invention, superadds the attraction of harmony; and then pours through the whole an irresistible fire of enthusiasm, wherewith to raise and to govern the passions.

Dramatic poetry, in this bold purpose, acts with most immediate and manifest consequence; because assembling together all that animates, invites, or enforces, it works with incredible influence upon the spirits and passions of a people, after they have been refined and induced to its relish.—It does this, in so confessed a degree, that our great philosopher abovenamed, undertaking, in his *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, professedly to consider its prevalence,

lence, beautifully calls it ~~the~~ bow of the mind ; as if, to express it more clearly, he had said, the stage is an instrument in the hands of the poet, as capable of giving modulation and tone to the heart, as the bow to the violin in the hands of a musician.

There is another advantage in poetry, which still further intitles it to the protection of princes, who are lovers, like your Royal Highness, of ages, which are only to hear of them. Other arts have some single and limited effect ; but the creations of poetry have a power to multiply their species in new and emulative successions of virtue and heroism ; the seeds, as it were, of those passions which produce noble qualities, being sown in all poems of genius.

If such desirable effects are now less common than anciently, it is only because sometimes tuneful emptiness is mistaken for poetry ; and sometimes calm, cold sense conveyed in unpassionate metre ; whereas poetry has no element but passion : and therefore rhyme, turn, and measure, are but fruitless affectations, where a spirit is not found that conveys the heat and enthusiasm. The poet, to say in all in a word, who can be read without excitement of the most passionate emotions in the heart, having been busily losing his pains, like a smith who would fashion cold iron : he has the regular return in the descent of the strokes, the insignificant jingle in the ring of the found, and the hammering delight in the labour ; but he has neither the penetration, the glow, nor the sparkling.

When in some unbending moments your Royal Highness shall reflect, perhaps, on the most likely measures for diminishing our pretences to poetry, yet augmenting its essential growth, how kind wou'd heaven be to the legitimate friends of the muses, should it, at those times, whisper in your ear, that no art ever flourished in monarchies till the favour of the court made it fashionable !

On my own part, I have little to say, worth the honour of your Royal Highness's notice ; being no more than an humble solicitor, for an event I have nothing to hope from. Not that I presume to represent myself as too stoical to feel the advantage of distinction. I am only too busy to be disposed for pursuing it : having renounced the

the world, without quitting it ; that, standing aside in an uncrowded corner, I might escape being hurried along in the dust of the show, and quietly see, and consider the whole as it passes ; instead of acting a part in it ; and that, perhaps, but a poor one.

In a situation so calm and untroubled, there arises a salutary habitude of supposing distinction to be lodged in the mind, and ambition in the use and command of the faculties. Such a choice may be silent, but not inactive : nay, I am afraid, he who makes it, is but a concealed kind of Epicure, notwithstanding his pretences to forbearance and philosophy : for while he partakes, in full relish, all the naked enjoyments of life, he throws nothing of it away, but its false face and its prejudices. He takes care to live at peace in the very centre of malice and faction ; for, viewing greatness without hope, he views it also without envy.

Upon the whole, though there may be a suspicion of something too selfish in this personal system of liberty, it will free a man in a moment from all those byassing partialities which hang their dead weight upon judgment ; and leave him as disinterested a spectator of the virtues or vices of cotemporary greatness, as of that which history has transmitted to him from times he had nothing to do with. I am, therefore, sure, it is no flattery, when I congratulate your Royal Highness on the humane glories of your future reign, and thank you for a thousand blessings I expect not to partake of.

I am,

With a profound respect,

S I R,

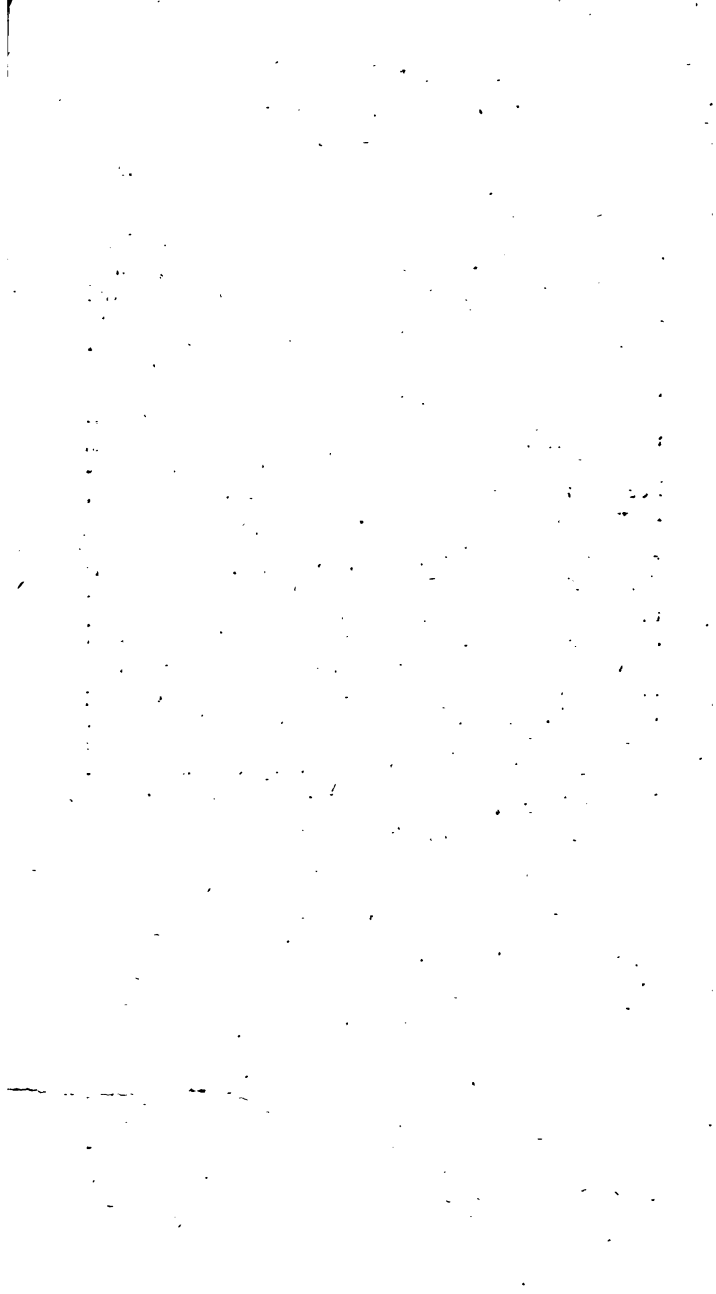
Your Royal Highness's

Most obedient and

Most humble servant,

A. HILL.

EPI-



P R O L O G U E.

WHEN some raw padd'ler from the waded shore.

First dares the deep'ning stream, and ventures o'er,
Light on his floating cork the wave he skims,
And, wanton in his safety, thinks he swims.

So shall *Alzira's* fame our faults protect,
And from your censure screen each fear'd defect.

For shou'd we act, unskill'd, the player's parts,

We act such scenes—as force us to your hearts.

What floods of tears a neighb'ring land saw flow,

When a whole people wept *Alzira's* woe!

The loveliest eyes of France, in one pleas'd night,

Twice charm'd, renew'd, and lengthen'd out delight.

Twice charm'd, review'd the sad, the melting strain,

Yet, hung insatiate, on the willing pain!

Thrice thirty days, all Paris sigh'd for sense!

Tumblers stood still—and thought—in wit's defence;

Ev'n power despotic felt, how wrongs can move;

And nobly wept for liberty and love.

Can it be fear'd then, that our gen'rous land,

Where justice blooms, and reason holds command;

This soil of science! where bold truth is taught,

This seat of freedom,—and this throne of thought;

Can pour applause on foreign song and dance,

Yet leave the praise of solid sense to France:

No—That's impossible—'tis Britain's claim,

To hold no second place in taste or fame.

In arts and arms alike victorious known,

Whate'er deserves her choice she makes her own.

Nor let the conscious power of English wit

Less feel the force, because a Frenchman writ.

Reason and sentiment, like air and light,

Where-ever found, are Nature's common right.

Since the same sun gives northern climes their day,

After the east has first receiv'd its ray,

Why should our pride repel the Muse's smile,

Because it dawn'd not first upon our isle?

Fraternal art adopts each alien fame;

The wise and brave are every where the same.

From hostile sentiments let discord flow;

But they who think like friends, should have no foe.

DRA-

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

Covent-Garden.

<i>Don Carlos</i> , governor of <i>Peru</i> , for the <i>Spaniards</i> , ———	Mr. Wright.
<i>Don Alvarez</i> , father of <i>Don Carlos</i> , and former governor, ———	Mr. Gifford.
<i>Zamor</i> , <i>Indian</i> sovereign of one part of the country, ———	Mr. Lewis.
<i>Exmont</i> , <i>Indian</i> sovereign of another part, ———	Mr. Havard.

W O M E N.

<i>Alzira</i> , daughter of <i>Exmont</i> , ———	Mrs. Giffard.
<i>Emira</i> , } <i>Alzira's women.</i>	
<i>Cephania</i> , }	

Spanish and American Captains and Soldiers.

SCENE, in the City of LIMA.

ALZIRA.

A L Z I R A.

A C T I.

Don Alvarez and Don Carlos.

ALVAREZ.

AT length the council partial to my prayer,
 Has to a son, I love, transferr'd my power.
 Carlos, rule happy ; be a viceroy long ;
 Long for thy prince, and for thy God, maintain
 This younger, richer, lovelier, half the globe ;
 Too fruitful, heretofore, in wrongs and blood ;
 Crimes the lamented growths of powerful gold !
 Safe to thy abler hand devolve, resign'd,
 Those sovereign honours which oppress'd my years,
 And dimm'd the feeble lamp of wasted age.
 Yet had it long, and not unuseful, flam'd.
 I first o'er wond'ring Mexico in arms
 March'd the new horrors of a world unknown !
 I steer'd the floating towers of fearless Spain
 Through the plow'd bosom of an untried sea.
 Too happy had my labours been so blest'd,
 To change my brave associate's rugged souls,
 And soften stubborn heroes into men.
 Their cruelties, my son, eclips'd their glory :
 And I have wept a conqueror's splendid shame.
 Whom heaven not better made, and yet made great.
 Wearied at length, I reach my life's last verge ;
 Where I shall peaceful veil my eyes in rest ;
 If ere they close, they but behold my Carlos
 Ruling Potosi's realm by Christian laws,
 And making gold more rich by gifts from heav'n.
D. Carlos. Taught and supported by your great exam-
 learnt beneath your eye to conquer realms, [ple,
 Which

Which by your counsels I may learn to govern ;
Giving those laws I first receive from you.

Alvarez. Not so.—Divided power is power disarm'd.
Outworn by labour, and decay'd by time,
Pomp is no more my wish. Enough for me
That heard in council age may temper rashness.
Trust me, mankind but ill rewards the pains
Of over-prompt ambition — 'Tis now time
To give my long-neglected God those hours,
Which close the languid period of my days.
One only gift I ask ; refuse not that ;
As friend I ask it ; and as father claim.
Pardon those poor Americans, condemn'd
For wand'ring hither, and this morning seiz'd.
To my disposal give 'em kindly up,
That liberty, unhop'd, may charm the more.
A day like this should merit smiles from all ;
And mercy, soft'ning justice, mark it bless'd.

D. Carlos. Sir, all that fathers ask, they must command.
Yet condescend to recollect how far
This pity, undeserv'd, might hazard all.
In infant towns like ours, methinks 'twere safe
Not to familiarize these savage spies.
If we accustom foes to look too near,
We teach 'em, at our cost, to slight those swords.
They once flew trembling from, whene'er they saw.
Frowning revenge, and awe of distant dread,
Not smiling friendship, tames these sullen souls.
The sow'r American, unbroke, and wild,
Spurns with indignant rage, and bites his chain,
Humble when punish'd ; if regarded, fierce.
Power sickens by forbearance : rigid men,
Who feel not pity's pangs, are best obey'd.
Spaniards, 'tis true, are rul'd by honour's law,
Submit unmurm'ring, and unforc'd go right.
But other nations are impell'd by fear,
And must be rein'd, and spur'd, with hard controul.
The gods themselves in this ferocious clime,
Till they look grim with blood, excite no dread.

Alvarez. Away, my son, with these detested schemes !
Perish such politic reproach of rule !
Are we made captains in our Maker's cause,

O'er

O'er these new Christians call'd to stretch his name,
 His peaceful name ! and shall we, unprovok'd,
 Bear murders, which our holy cheats presume
 To mispronounce his injur'd altar's due !
 Shall we dispeople realms, and kill to save !
 Such if the fruits of Spain's religious care,
 I, from the distant bounds of our old world,
 Have to this new one stretch'd a Saviour's name,
 To make it hateful to one half the globe,
 Because no mercy grac'd the other's zeal.
 No, my misguided Carlos, the broad eye
 Of one Creator takes in all mankind :
 His laws expand the heart ; and we, who thus
 Wou'd by destruction propagate belief,
 And mix with blood and gold religion's growth,
 Stamp in these Indian's honest breasts a scorn
 Of all we teach, : from what they see we do.

D. Carlos. Yet the learned props of our unerring church,
 Whom zeal for saving souls deprives of rest,
 Taught my late youth, committed to their care,
 That ignorance, averse, must be compell'd.

Alv. Our priests are all for vengeance, force, and fire :
 And only in his thunder act their God.

Hence we seem thieves ; and what we seem we are.

Spain has robb'd every growth of this new world,

Even to its savage nature !—Vain, unjust,

Proud, cruel, covetous, we, we alone,

Are the barbarians here !—An Indian heart

Equals, in courage, the most prompt of ours,

But in simplicity of artless truth,

And every honest native warmth, excells us.

Had they, like us, been bloody ; had they not

By pity's power been mov'd, and virtue's love,

No son of mine had heard a father, now

Reprove his erring rashness.—You forget,

That when a pris'ner in these people's hands,

Gall'd and provok'd by cruelty and wrongs,

While my brave follow'rs fell on every side,

Till I alone surviv'd, some Indians knew me,

Knew me, and suddenly pronounc'd my name.

At once they threw their weapons to the ground,

And a young savage chief, whom yet I know not,

B

Grace-

Graceful approach'd, and, kneeling, press'd my knees.
 Alvarez, is it you, he cry'd—Live long !
 Ours be your virtue, but not ours your blood !
 Live, and instruct oppressors to be lov'd.
 Bless'd be those tears, my son !—I think you weep.
 Joy to your soft'ning soul ! Humanity
 Has power, in nature's right, beyond a father.
 But from what motive sprung this late decline
 From clemency of heart to new-born rigour ?
 Had you been always cruel, with what brow
 Cou'd you have hop'd to charm the lov'd Alzira ?
 Heiress to realms, dispeopled by your sword !
 And though your captive, yet your conqu'ror too.
 Trust me,—with women worth the being won,
 The softest lover ever best succeeds.

D. Carlos. Sir, I obey: your pleasure breaks their
 Yet 'tis their duty to embrace our faith : [chains ;
 So runs the king's command.—To merit life,
 Quit they their idol worship, and be free.
 So thrives religion, and compels the blind ;
 So draws our holy altar souls by force,
 Till opposition dies, and sleeps in peace ;
 So links a govern'd world in faith's strong chain ;
 And but one monarch serves, and but one God.

Alv. Hear me, my son.—That crown'd in this new
 Religion may erect her holy throne, [world,
 Is what, with ardent zeal, my soul desires ;
 Let Heaven and Spain find here no future foe !
 Yet ne'er did persecution's offspring thrive :
 For the forc'd heart, submitting, still resists.
 Reason gains all men by compelling none.
 Mercy was always Heaven's distinguish'd mark ;
 And he who bears it not, has no friend there.

D. Carlos. Your reasons, like your arms, are sure to
 I am instructed and ennobled by them ! [conquer.
 Indulgent virtue dwells in all you say,
 And softens, while you speak, the list'ning soul !
 Since Heaven has bless'd you with this powerful gift,
 To breathe persuasion and uncharm resolves,
 Pronounce me favour'd, and you make me so.
 Warm my Alzira's coldness ; dry her tears ;
 And teach her to be mine.—I love that maid,

Spite of my pride ! blush at it — but still love her !
 Yet will I ne'er, to sooth unyielding scorn,
 Unman the soldier in the lover's cause.
 I cannot stoop to fan a hopeless flame,
 And be in vain her slave.—You, Sir, might aid me :
 You can do all things with Alzira's father.
 Bid him command his daughter to be kind :
 Bid him — But whither would my love mislead me !
 Forgive the blind presumption of a hope,
 That to my int'rest stoops my father's rank ;
 And sends him beggar to an Indian's door !

Alv. 'Tis done already. I have urg'd it to him.
 Ezmont has mov'd his daughter in your cause.
 Wait the prepar'd event. Heaven has been kind ;
 Since these illustrious captives both are Christians ;
 Ezmont my convert, and his daughter his.
 Alzira governs a whole people's minds ;
 Each watchful Indian reads her studied eye,
 And to her silent heart conforms his own.
 Your marriage shall unite two distant worlds :
 For when the stern repiner at our law
 Sees in your arms the daughter of his king,
 With humbler spirit, and with heart less fierce,
 His willing neck shall court the yoke he scorn'd.
 But look, where Ezmont comes !—Retire, my son ;
 And leave me to complete the task begun. [*Exit D. Carr.*
Enter Ezmont.

Welcome, my friend ; your council, or command,
 Has left, I hope, Alzira well resolv'd.

Ezm. Great father of the friendless !—Pardon yet,
 If one, whose sword seem'd fatal to her race,
 Keeps her heart cold, with some remains of horror,
 We move with ling'ring steps to those we fear.
 But prejudice will fly before your voice,
 Whose winning manners consecrate your laws.
 To you who gave us heav'n, our earth is due.
 Yours our new being, our enlighten'd souls ;
 Spain may hold realms by purchase of her sword ;
 And worlds may yield to power—but we to virtue,
 Your bloody nation's unsuccessing pride
 Had made their God disgustful as their crimes !
 We saw him hateful in their murd'rous zeal ;

But lov'd him in your mercy.—From your heart
His influence stream'd accepted; and my crown,
My daughter, and my soul, became your slaves.

Father alike of Carlos and of me,
I give him my Alzira for your sake;
And with her all Potosi and Peru.

Summon the reverend choir; prepare the rites;
And trust my promise for my daughter's will.

Alv. Blest'd be the long-wish'd sound!—This great
work past,

I shall go down in peace, and hail my grave.
Oh, thou great leader! whose almighty hand
Drew the dark veil aside that hid new worlds;
Smile on this union, which, confirmed by thee,
Shall in one empire grasp the circled globe,
And task the sun's whole round to measure Spain!
Ezmont, farewell,—I go to greet my son,
With welcome news, how much he owes my friend.

[*Exit.*

Ezm. [*Alone.*] Thou, nameless Power, unequal'd and
alone!

Whose dreadful vengeance overwhelm'd, at once,
My country, and her gods, too weak to save!
Protect my failing years from new distress.
Robb'd of my all: but this one daughter left me;
Oh, guard her heart, and guide her to be blest!

[*Enter Alzira.*

Daughter, be happy, while good fortune courts thee;
And in thy blessing cheer thy country's hope.
Protect the vanquish'd: rule the victor's will;
Seize the bent thunder in his lifted hand;
And from despair's low seat, remount a throne.
Lend the lov'd public thy reluctant heart;
And in the joy of millions find thy own.
Nay, do not weep, Alzira: tears will now
Seem insults, and reproach thy father's care.

Alz. Sir, my whole soul, devoted, feels your power.
Yet, if Alzira's peace was ever dear,
Shut not your ear to my despairing grief;
But, in my nuptials, read my certain doom.

Ezm. Urge it no more: it is an ill-tim'd sorrow.
Away! I had thy kind consent before.

Alz. No,—you compell'd the frightful sacrifice:

And,

And, ah, remorseless heaven!—at what a time!
 When the rais'd sword of this all-murd'ring lover
 Hangs o'er my people heads with threat'ning sway,
 To strike the trembling remnant from my sight,
 And mark my nuptial day a day of death!
 Omens on omens have pronounc'd it curs'd.

Ezm. Quit these vain fears, these superstitious dreams
 Of unconfiding ignorance! What day?

What omens?—We ourselves, who chuse our acts,
 Make our own days, or happy, or accurs'd.

Alz. 'Twas on this day, the pride of all our state,
 Zamor the great, the warlike Zamor fell;
 Zamor, my lover, and your purpos'd son.

Ezm. Zamor was brave; and I have mourn'd his fall.
 But the cold grave dissolves ev'n lovers' vows.

Bear to the altar then a heart resolv'd:
 And let thy summon'd virtue check thy weakness.
 Was not thy soul enroll'd a Christian lately?

The awful Power that lent those Christians name,
 Speaks in my voice; commands thee to be won.
 Hear him; and learn obedience to his will,

Alz. Alas, my father! spare this dreadful zeal.
 Has not the parent spoke? Why speaks the God?

I know, and I confess, a father's power;
 At his command to sacrifice the life

He gave me, is a duty nature taught.

But my obedience passes nature's bounds;

Whate'er I see, is with my father's eyes;

Whate'er I love, is for my father's sake;

I chang'd my very gods, and took my fathers:

Yet has this father, piously severe,

Wrong'd my believing weakness, and undone me.

He told me to compose my troubled heart,

Peace held her dwelling at the altar's foot.

He told me, that religion cur'd despair,

And soften'd every pang that pierc'd the soul:

But, ah, 'twas all deceit! all dear delusion!

Mix'd with the image of an awful God,

A human image struggles in my heart,

And checks my willing virtue in its rising.

Zamor, though dead to nature, lives to love.

Zamor still triumphs in Alzira's breast,

Lord of her soul, and holds back all her wishes.
 You frown.—Alas, you blame a guilt you caus'd.
 Quench then this flame, too hard for death and time;
 And force me to be his whom most I hate,
 If my lov'd country bids, I must obey.
 Yet, while by force you join unsocial hands,
 Tremble whene'er you drag me to the altar,
 Tremble to hear my tongue deceive my God;
 To hear me to this hated tyrant vow
 A heart, that beats, unchang'd, another's due.

Exm. Alas, my child, what unweigh'd words are these!
 Pity my age, unfit for length'ning woes:
 Nature asks rest: pity these falling tears.
 By all our fates, that all depend on thee,
 Let me conjure thee to be blest thyself,
 Nor close in misery my life's last scene.
 Why do I live, but to redeem thy hopes?
 For thy own sake, not mine, assist my care.
 Blast not the ripening prospect of thy peace,
 Hard, and with labour'd patience, slowly grown.
 Now, on thy instant choice, depends thy fate!
 Nor only thine, but a whole people's fate!
 Wilt thou betray them? Have they other help?
 Have they a hope, but thee?—Think, think, Alzira;
 And nobly lose thyself to save a state. *[Exit.]*

Alz. Cruel accomplishment! sublime defect!
 So feign we virtues to become a throne,
 Till public duty drowns our private truth.

Enter Don Carlos.

D. Carlos. Princess, you give a lover cause to doubt,
 That this long labour of your slow consent
 Springs from a heart too cold to feel his flame.
 While, for your sake, suspended law forbears
 To punish rebels, whom you wish to save,
 Ungrateful, you compel a nation's freedom,
 And bind, in recompence, my chains more close!
 Yet misconceive me not.—I would not owe
 A softened sentiment to having serv'd you;
 That were to bribe a heart my pride wou'd win.
 I shou'd with mingled joy and blushes gain you,
 If, as my perquisite of power you sell.
 Let me attract, not force you.—I would owe you,

All

All to yourself ; nor could I taste a joy,
That, in your giving it, might cost you pain.

Alz. Join, Sir, my fruitless prayers to angry Heav'n !
This dreadful day comes charg'd with pains for both.

—No wonder you detect my troubled soul:

It bursts unveil'd from my disclosing eyes,

And glows on every feature's honest air.

Such is the plainness of an Indian heart,

That it disdains to scull behind the tongue ;

But throws out all its wrongs, and all its rage.

She who can hide her purpose, can betray ;

And that's a Christian virtue I've not learnt.

D. Car. I love your frankness, but reproach its cause,

Zamor, remember'd Zamor speaks in this.

With hatred stretch'd beyond th' extent of life,

He crosses from the tomb, his conqueror's will ;

And felt through death revenge's rival love.

Cease to complain, and you may learn to bear.

My fame, your duty, both require a change ;

And I must wish it were from tears to joy.

Alz. A rival's grave should bury jealousy.

But whence your right to censure sorrow for him ?

I lov'd him ; I proclaim it. Had I not,

I had been blind to sense, and lost to reason.

Zamor was all the prop of our fallen world :

And, but he lov'd me much, confess'd no weakness !

Had I not mourn'd a fate he not deserv'd,

I had deserv'd the fate he felt unjustly.

For you,—be proud no more ; but dare be honest.

Far from presuming to reproach my tears,

Honour my constancy, and praise my virtue :

Cease to regret the dues I pay the dead ;

And merit, if you can, a heart thus faithful. [*Exit.*]

D. Car. [*Alone.*] Spite of my fruitless passion, I confess,

Her pride, thus starting its sincere disdain,

Astonishes my thought, and charms my anger.

—What then shall I resolve ?—Must it cost more

To tame one female heart than all Peru !

Nature, adapting her to suit her climate,

Left her all savage, yet all shining too !

But 'tis my duty to be master here ;

Where.

Where, she alone excepted, all obey.
 Since then too faintly I her heart incline,
 I'll force her stubborn hand, and fix her mine.

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

Zamor, and four Indian Captains, in Chains.

ZAMOR.

FRIENDS, who have dar'd beyond the strength of
 mortals ;

Whose courage scorn'd restraint, and grew in danger ;

Associates in my hopes and my misfortunes !

Since we have lost our vengeance, let death find us !

Why should we longer be condemn'd to life,

Defenceless to our country and Alzira ?

Yet why should Spanish Carlos 'scape our swords ?

Why thrive beneath a weight of uncheck'd crimes ?

And why has Heaven forsaken us and virtue ?

Ye strengthless powers ! whose altars smok'd in vain !

Gods of a faithful, yet a cheated people !

Why have you thus betray'd us to the foe ?

Why had six hundred Spanish vagrants power

To crush my throne, your temples, rites, and you ?

Where are your altars ? where my glories now ?

Where is Alzira ? more herself a god,

Than your collected queens of fancied heaven !

Helpless once more thou seest me, — lost Peru !

O'er shifting sands, through deserts, cross'd in vain,

From forest wilds, impervious to the sun ;

From the world's wastes, beneath the burning zone,

I brought thee unhop'd aid ! the wond'ring stars

Beheld me gath'ring from remotest wilds,

New strength, new prospects, and new means to die !

Your arms, your furtherance, your vast support,

New-furnish'd my desires, and wing'd my hope.

Vengeance and love once more had mann'd my heart.

But, ah, how vain that hope ! how lost that vengeance !

The slaves of avarice are honour's masters !

Ind.

Ind. Capt. Why left we in the neighb'ring woods our forces?

Why dar'd we pass too bold their guarded gates,
Alone, and unsupported,—rash discoverers?

Zam. Seiz'd but this morning from our dungeon's
Th' infernal murderers have hither brought us, [depth,
Unknowing to what death, though sure to die.
Yet it o'erjoys me, we have met once more.
But where? what place is this? Has none yet heard
Who governs here? what fate Alzira found?
Whether her father is, like us, their slave?
Dear, wretched friends, who share a death, my due,
Can none instruct me what I wish to know?

Ind. Cap. From sep'rate prisons hither led, like you,
Through diff'rent streets we came, the cause not known:
All uninform'd of what you seek to learn.
Great, but unhappy prince! deserving long
A nobler fate! our silent souls lament
Our want of power to save so lov'd a leader.
Now to die with you is our noblest claim,
Since to die for you was a choice denied us.

Zam. Next the wish'd glory of success in war,
The greatest is to die, and die renown'd.
But to die noteless, in the shameful dark,
To die, and leave in chains our suff'ring country!
To fall, undignified, by villains' hands;
The sacrifice of Europe's outcast bloodhounds!
Horrid with others wounds, and poorly rich,
With others plunder'd treasure; die by butchers!
Blood-stain'd insulters of a yielded world?
Riflers, who gave me up to tire their tortures,
But for discovery of the gold I scorn'd,
As drops, less valued, and less wish'd than they!
To be in death the cause of my friend's dying!
To die, and leave Alzira to my murderers!
This is a death of horror, not of fame!
This is the body's death—but shakes the soul!

Enter Alvarez, with a guard of Spaniards.

Alv. Live, and be free.

[Spanish Soldiers unfetter the Indians.]

Zam. Ye gods of lost Peru!
What do I hear!—said he, Be free, and live?

What

What vast mysterious accident of virtue ?
 Some power divine, in sport, deceives my wonder !
 Thou seem'st a Spaniard !—and—but thou forgive'st,
 I cou'd have sworn thee Christian !—Who ? what art thou ?
 Art thou some god ? or this new city's king ?

Alv. Christian I am ; and Spaniard : but no king.
 Yet serves my power to save the weak, distress'd. [der ?

Zam. What thy distinction then ? thou gen'rous won-

Alv. 'T'he love of pity, when the wretched want it.

Zam. Pity ! and Christian !—what inspir'd thy great-

Alv. My memory, my duty, and my God. [ness ?

Zam. Thy God ?—perhaps then ; these insatiate waiters,
 These human seemers, with but forms of men ;
 These thirsters after only gold and blood :
 From some coarse, lawless part of Europe came ;
 And serve some bloodier God that wars with thine ?

Alv. Their faith the same with mine, but not their
 nature :

Christians by birth, by error, made unchristian,
 In power grown giddy, they disgrace command.
 Thou know'st their faults too well : now, know my duty.
 Twice has the sun's broad traverse girt the globe,
 Twice wheel'd the summer round your world and ours,
 Since a brave Indian, native of your land,
 To whom surprize in ambush made me captive,
 Gave me the forfeit life his sword had won.
 The unexpected mercy forc'd my blushes :
 For, I perceiv'd, compassion of your wces,
 Was but a duty, when I thought 'twas virtue.
 Thenceforth, your countrymen became my brothers ;
 And I have now but one complaint against them ;
 —That I must never know his name who sav'd me.

Zam. He has Alvarez's voice ! He has his features !
 His age the same too ; and the same his story !
 'Tis he !—there is no other honest Christian.
 Look on us all ; and recollect his face,
 Who wisely spar'd thy life to spread thy virtues.

Alv. Come nearer, noble youth.—By Heaven, 'tis he !
 Now, my dim eyes, you teach me my decay,
 That cou'd not let me see my wish indulg'd,
 But clouded ev'n my gratitude !—My son !
 My benefactor ! Saviour of my age !
 What can I do ! Instruct me to deserve thee.

Dwell

Dwell in my fight ; and I will be thy father.
 Thou wilt have lost the merit of thy gift,
 If, from the power it gave, thou claim'st no payment.

Zam. Trust me, my father, had thy Spanish sons
 Shewn but a glimm'ring of thy awful virtue,
 Grateful Peru, now desolately, theirs,
 Had been a'peopled world of willing slaves.
 But cruelty, and pride, and plunder, claim them.
 Rather than live among that felon race,
 Hide, hide me, silent death ; and screen my soul
 From the reliefless rage of unfelt curses.
 All I wou'd ask, all I will take from Spain,
 Is but to be inform'd, if Ezmont lives ?
 Or, has his blood new-stain'd their hands with murder ?
 Ezmont ?---perhaps you knew him not ?---That Ezmont,
 Who was Alzira's father ?---I must stop,
 And weep---before I dare go on, to ask---
 Whether---that father,---and that daughter---live ?

Alv. Hide not thy tears : weep boldly---and be proud
 To give the flowing virtue manly way ;
 'Tis nature's mark to know an honest heart by.
 Shame on those breasts of stone, that cannot melt,
 In soft adaption of another's sorrow.
 But be thou comforted ; for both thy friends
 Live, and are happy here.

Zam. And shall I see 'em ?

Alv. Ezmont, within this hour, shall teach his friend
 To live, and hope---and be as bless'd as he.

Zam. Alzira's Ezmont ?---

Alv. From his mouth, not mine,
 Thou shalt, this moment, learn whate'er thou seek'st.
 He shall instruct thee in a smiling charge,
 That has united Spain with fav'd Peru.
 I have a son to bless with this new joy :
 He will partake my happiness, and love thee.
 ---I quit thee,---but will instantly return
 To charm thee with this union's happy story,
 That nothing now on earth has power to sever---
 Yet, which once clos'd, shall quiet warring worlds.

[Exit, with Guards.]

Zam. At length, th' awak'ning gods remember Zamor,
 And to atone my wrongs by working wonders,

Have

Have made a Spaniard honest to reward me!
 Alvarez is himself the Christians' God;
 Who long provok'd, and blushing at their crimes,
 In his own right descends, to veil their shame.
 He says, he has a son; that son shall be
 My brother, if, at least, he does but prove
 Worthy, (cou'd man be so) of such a father!
 Oh, day! Oh, dawn of hope, on my sad heart!
 Ezmont, now, after three long years of woe,
 Ezmont, Alzira's father, is restor'd me!
 Alzira too, the dear, the gen'rous maid,
 She, whom my fighting soul has been at work for?
 She, who has made me brave, and left me wretched!
 Alzira too is here! and lives to thank me.

Enter Ezmont.

Oh, ye profuse rewarders of my pain!
 He comes!—my Ezmont comes!—Spring of my hopes,
 Thou father of my lab'ring mind's inspirer!
 Hard let me press thee to a heart that loves thee.
 Escap'd from death, behold returning Zamor.
 He will not, cannot die, while there is hope,
 That he may live to serve a suff'ring friend.
 Speak, speak; and be thy first soft word Alzira!
 Say, she is here; and bless'd, as Heaven can make her.
Ezm. Unhappy prince!—She lives; nor lives remote.
 Words cannot reach description of her grief,
 Since first the news of thy sad death was brought her.
 Long dwelt she, sorrowing, o'er an empty tomb,
 Which, for thy fancied form, she rais'd to weep on.
 But thou still liv'st!—amazing chance!—thou liv'st!
 • Heav'n grant some doubtful means to bless thee long,
 And make thy life as happy——as 'tis strange!
 —What brought thee hither, Zamor?

Zam. Cruel question!

Colder than all the deaths I have escap'd from!
 Why dost thou ask? Where else cou'd I have hop'd
 To find, and to redeem thyself and daughter?

Ezm. Say that no more--'tis misery to hear thee.

Zam. Bethink thee of the black, the direful day,
 When that vile Spaniard, Carlos, curse the name!
 Invulnerable, or to sword or shame,
 O'erturn'd these walls, which time, when young, saw built,

By

By earth attract'd, children of the sun.
 Perish his name ! and, Oh, be curs'd my fate,
 Who yet no nearer brought him than to thought,
 In horror of his murders ! 'Twas the wretch,
 Who bears that name of Carlos, blasted all.
 'Twas in that name, pillage and slaughter spread !
 'Twas in that name, they dragg'd Alzira from me ;
 Buried in dust the temples of our gods ;
 And stain'd with the surrounding off'rer's blood,
 Their violated altars ! The shock'd pow'r,
 That smil'd expectant on our marriage vow,
 Rush'd back, and press'd in vain his brother gods,
 To vindicate their empire.——Spain's dark power
 Prevail'd ; and I was captive led to Carlos.
 I will not terrify thy pitying breast,
 I will not tell thee, to what tort'ring pain,
 That villain Spaniard's avarice condemn'd me.
 Condemn'd me, Ezmont, for the sake of gold !
 Gold, the divinity of beggar Spain ;
 And our neglected refuse ! ——'Tis enough,
 To tell thee, that amidst their tortures left,
 And seeming dead, they, tir'd, not satisfied,
 Forbore, because I felt not.——I reviv'd,
 To feel, once more, but never to forget,
 The grindings of their insult. Three long years
 Have lent me friends, and hopes, and arms, for vengeance.
 Close ambush'd in the neighb'ring woods they lie,
 Sworn the revengers of their bleeding country.

Ezm. Alas, my heart compassionates thy wrongs :
 But do not seek a ruin that wou'd shun thee.
 What can thy flint-arm'd Indian's courage do ?
 What their weak arrows, spoils of fishes bones ?
 How can thy naked, untrain'd warriors conquer ?
 Unequally oppos'd to iron-men :
 To woundless bosoms coated o'er with safety !
 And arm'd with missive thunders in their hand,
 That stream deaths on us, swifter than the winds !
 No---since the world, they say, has yielded to 'em,
 Yield Zamor and Peru, and let 'em reign.

Zam. Let the world yield---Zamor will always find
 Some gen'rous corner in it, fit for freedom.
 Had I been born to serve, obedience claims

Returns of benefit and due protection :

Outrage and wrongs require correction only.

These lightnings and these thunders ; these safe shells,

Cases for fear, which guard their iron war ;

These fiery steeds, that tear the trampled earth,

And hurl their headlong riders on the foe ;

These outward forms of death, that fright the world,

I can look stedfast on ; and dare despise.

The novelty once lost, the force will fail.

Curse on our feeble gold ! it calls in foes,

Yet helps not to repel the wrongs it draws !

Oh, had but steel been ours !---but partial heaven

Has, with that manly wealth, enrich'd our foe !

Yet, not to leave our vengeance quite disarm'd,

Depriving us of steel, it gave us virtue.

Ezm. Virtue was bless'd of old :---but,---times are chang'd.

Zam. No matter---let us keep our hearts the same.

Alzira cannot change---Alzira's just.

Alzira's faithful to her vows and me.

Save me, ye gods ! from a friend's downcast eye !

Whence are those sighs and tears ?

Ezm. Too wretched Zamor !

Zam. I thought myself Alzira's father's son ;

But find these tyrants have unking'd thy soul ;

And taught thee, on the grave's last edge, to wrong me.

Ezm. They cannot. 'Tis an art I will not learn.

Nor are our conqu'rors all unjust ;---for, know,

'Twas Heaven induc'd these Christians to our clime,

Less to subdue, and rule us, than instruct.

Know, they brought with them virtues, here unfound :

Secrets, immortal, that preserve the soul !

The science of salvation by belief !

The art of living bless'd, and dying safe !

Zam. Or I am deaf : or, wou'd to Heaven, I were !

But, if I heard thee right, thou seem'st to praise

These pilfering zealots, who usurp thy throne,

And wou'd convert thy daughter to a slave !

Ezm. Alzira is no slave.

Zam. Ah !---Royal Ezmont !

Pardon some transport, which despair inflam'd ;

And, to great woes, indulge a little warmth.

Remember, she was mine by solemn vow:
By thy own oath, before our altar sworn;
Honour and perjury can never meet.

Ezm. What are our altars? what our idol gods?
Phantoms of human coinage, fear'd no more!
I would not wish to hear thee cite their name.

Zam. What! was our father's altars vain deceit?

Ezm. It was; and I have happily disclaim'd it.
May the great single Power, that rules whole heaven,
Lend thy dark heart one ray of truth divine!
May'st thou, unhappy Zamor, learn to know,
And, knowing, to confess, in Europe's right,
Her god should be ador'd, her sons obey'd!

Zam. Obey'd! Hell blast 'em!—What! these sons of rapine?

They have not robb'd thee of thy faith alone,
But pilfer'd even thy reason!—Yet, 'twas wise,
When thou would'st keep no vows, to own no gods.
But, tell me;—is Alzira too forsworn?
True to her father's weakness has she fallen?
Serves she the gods of Christians?

Ezm. hapless youth!

Though blest'd in my own change, I weep for thine.

Zam. He, who betrays his friend, has cause for weep.
Yet tears, they say, shew pity:—if they do, [ing.
Pity this torment, which thy shame has cost me.
Pity my heart, at once alarm'd, for heaven,
For heav'n betray'd, like me; and torn at once,
By love, and zeal, and vengeance. Take me, Carlos;
Drag me to die at my Alzira's feet;
And I will sigh away a soul, she saves not,
But have a care—be cautious, ere I fall;
Of urging me, too rashly, to despair,
Resume a human heart! and feel some virtue.

Enter Alonzo.

Alon. My Lord, the ceremonies wait your presence.

Ezm. Farewel—I follow thee.

Zam. No, by my wrongs!

I will not quit this hold, till I have learnt,
What ceremony, what black purpose, waits thee?

Ezm. Away—be counsell'd—fly this fatal city.

Zam. Not though the Christian power that blasts my
love,

Shou'd rain down lightnings on my destin'd head,
And my own gods cry'd, stay, I still would follow thee.

Ezm. Forgive the force of an unwish'd refusal. —

Guards, to your care I must commit this madman.

Restrain him — He wou'd violate our altar.

These Pagans, obstinate in idol zeal,

Malign our holy myst'ries, and profane

The church's solemn service. — Guard the doors.

'Tis not in right of my own power I speak;

But, Carlos, in my voice, commands your care.

[*Exit with Guards, after they have freed him from Zamor.*]

Zam. Did I not hear him, friends! — or am I mad?

Did I not hear him use the name of Carlos?

Oh, treachery! Oh, baseness! Oh, my wrongs!

Oh, last, uncredited, reproach of nature!

Ezmont commands for Carlos? — 'Twas not Ezmont:

'Twas that black devil, that scares the Christian cowards,

Lies, in his shape, to scandalize Peru!

Oh, virtue! thou art banish'd from mankind:

Even from Alzira's heart, thou now art fled.

— These villain bart'ers rob us not of gold,

They pay its fatal price, in morals ruin'd.

Detested Carlos, then is here! — Oh, friends!

What council? what resource? to stop despair.

Ind. Cap. Let not my prince condemn the faithful zeal,

That wou'd advise his sorrows. — Old Alvarez

Will strait return, and bring, perhaps, that son,

With whom to share his joy the good man hasten'd.

Urge him to see you safe without their gates:

Then suddenly rejoin your ambush'd friends,

And march, more equal, to your purpos'd vengeance.

Let us not spare a life, but good Alvarez,

And this lov'd son! I, near the wall, remark'd

Their arts, and modes of structure: mark'd their angles,

Deep ditch, broad bulwarks, and their sleeping thunders.

I saw, and weigh'd it all: and found hope strongest.

Our groaning fathers, brothers, sons, and friends,

In fetter'd labour toil, to house their spoilers.

These, when we march to their unhop'd relief,

Will rise, within the town, behind their masters:

While you, mean while, without, advance against them:

And, o'er our dying bodies, proudly heap'd,

Bridge

Fail'd to divide our hands——and he has reach'd me !
 The altar trembled at th' unhallow'd touch ;
 And Heaven drew back, reluctant, at our meeting.
 Oh, thou soft-hovering ghost, that haunt'st my fancy !
 Thou dear and bloody form, that skins before me !
 Thou never-dying, yet thou buried Zamor !
 If sighs and tears, have power to pierce the grave ;
 If death, that knows no pity, will but hear me ;
 If still thy gentle spirit loves Alzira :
 Pardon, that even in death, she dar'd forsake thee !
 Pardon her rigid sense of nature's duties :
 A parent's will !——a pleading country's safety !
 At these strong calls, she sacrific'd her love ;
 To joyless glory, and to tasteless peace :
 And to an empty world, in which thou art not !
 Oh, Zamor ! Zamor ! follow me no longer.
 Drop some dark veil, snatch some kind cloud before thee,
 Cover that conscious face, and let death hide thee !
 Leave me to suffer wrongs that Heaven allots me :
 And teach my busy fancy to forget thee.

Enter Emira.

Where are those captives ? Are they free, Emira ?
 Where those sad children of my mournful country ?
 Will they not suffer me to see, to hear them ?
 To sit and weep, and mingle with their mournings ?

Emira. Ah, rather dread the rage of angry Carlos,
 Who threatens 'em with some new stroke of horror.
 Some cruel purpose hangs, this moment, o'er 'em !
 For, through this window look, and see display'd,
 The broad red standard, that betokens blood ;
 Loud bursts of death roar from their iron prisons,
 And answer, dreadful, to each others call !

[*Guns.*

The council hastes, alarm'd, and meets in uproar. [*Shouts.*
 All I have heard besides is, that the prince,
 Your father, has been summon'd to attend.

Alz. Immortal guardian of th' endanger'd just !
 Have I for this, in vain, betray'd my peace ?
 Dares the dire husband, recent from the altar,
 New to my forc'd consent,—and scarce yet lord
 Of my repenting hand ; so soon let loose
 His recommission'd murders ! Must my nuptials
 Serve, as the prelude, to my people's blood !

Oh,

Oh, marriage ! marriage ! what a curse is thine,
Where hands alone consent, and hearts abhor !

Enter Cephania.

Ceph. One of the captive Indians, just set free,
In honour of the joy that crowns this day,
Prays your permission, Madam; to be heard,
And at your princely feet disclose some secret.

Alz. Let him, with firmness, and with freedom enter.
For him, and for his friends; he knows I live.
Dear to my eyes, I mark 'em with delight,
And love, alas, in them, their poor lost country.
——But why alone?——Why one?

Ceph. It is that captain,
To whose victorious hand, I heard, but now,
Alvarez, your new lord's illustrious father,
Ow'd his remitted life, from Indians sav'd.

Emira. With earnest pressure, he has sought your
presence:

He met me entering, and with trembling haste,
Implor'd me to befriend th' important prayer.
He told me, further, that the prince your father,
For some strange cause, this Indian seems to know,
Had charg'd the guards he 'scap'd from, to prevent
His access to your ear——Methinks, there sits
A kind of sullen greatness on his brow,
As if it veil'd, in grief, some awful purpose.

Ceph. I watch'd him—and he walks, and turns, and
weeps:

Then starts, and looks at heaven; and to the gods,
Pours up an ardent sigh, that breathes your name !
I pitied him——but, gather'd, from this freedom,
That he's a stranger to your rank and greatness.

Alz. What rank? What greatness?—Perish all dis-
tinction;

That, from the wrong'd unhappy, bars the great !
Who knows, but this was once some gen'rous friend,
Some brave companion of my Zamor's arms !
Who knows, but he was near him, when he fell ;
And brings some message from his parting soul !
How dare I then receive him ?——Can my heart
Be proof against the last kind words of Zamor ?
Will not the half-lull'd pain, rekindling fresh,

Burn

Burn, with increase of smart, and wring my soul?

—No matter,—let him enter.— [*Exit Cephasia.*]

—Ha, what means

This sudden chillness, sadd'ning round my heart,

In short, faint flutt'ring never felt before!

Ah, fatal residence!—From the first hour

These hated walls became Alzira's prison,

Each diff'rent moment brought some diff'rent pain.

Enter Zamor.

Zam. Art thou, at length, restor'd me?—Cruel! tell
Art thou, indeed, Alzira? [*me!*]

Alz. —Gentle spirit!—

Forgive me.—Do not come to chide th' unhappy!

I have been wrong'd; but— [*Faints into his arms.*]

Zam. Thine, she wou'd have said;
And her imperfect purpose fully bless'd me.

Revive, thou dearest, loveliest, lost Alzira!

Zamor will live no longer, thou'dst thou die.

Alz. The kind, forgiving shade, is still before me,
It wak'd me, by a sound, that seem'd his name.

Zam. I am no shadow, if Alzira's mine;
I am thy living lover, at thy feet

Reclaiming thee, thou noblest half himself! [*Kneeling.*]

Alz. Can it be possible, thou should'st be Zamor?

Zam. Thy Zamor—thine.

Alz. But,—art thou sure, thou liv'st?

Zam. 'Tis in thy power,
To make that truth undoubted.—Do but say,
Thou would'st not have me die,—and I will live,
To thank thee; thus with everlasting love.

[*Rises, and catches her in his arms.*]

Alz. Oh, days of softness!—Oh, remembered years,
Of ever-vanish'd happiness!—Oh, Zamor!

Why has the grave been bountiful too late?

Why sent thee back in vain? to make joy bitter;

By mix'd ideas of distracting horror!

Ah, Zamor!—What a time is this,—to charm in!

Thy every word, and look, shoots daggers through me.

Zam. Then mourn'st thou my return?

Alz. I do—I do.

Because,—it was no sooner.

Zam. Generous tenderness!

Alz.

Alz. Where hast thou been, thus long, unknown,
till now?

Zam. A wand'ring vagabond, that trod the world,
In fruitless search of means, to save Alzira.
Not all the tort'ring racks of villain Carlos,
Cou'd from my panting heart expell Alzira.
The bloody spoiler tir'd his rage in vain :
I brav'd his wounds and insults.——Life had yet
No leisure to forsake me. Thou requir'st me.
The groans of suff'ring nations reach'd my soul,
And bad it struggle to revenge mankind.
Alas, thou tremblest ! Thy soft nature shrinks,
At bare recital of these Spanish virtues.
Doubtless, the guardian god that smiles on love,
Knew thy kind wish :---and, for thy sake, sustain'd me.
And thou wilt thank, I know, his gentle goodness.
Thy pious heart disdains to quit thy gods,
Because they suffer with thee ; and have fail'd
To stem th' invading host of Spain's new Heav'n !
Thou hast too little falsehood for a Spaniard.
—Hast thou e'er heard of a base wretch, call'd Carlos ?
A birth that blackens nature ! a taught monster !
Sent, in our shape, from some far distant world,
To humble ours, with sense of human baseness !
They tell me, he is here.—Grant heav'n thou knowest
him !

Thou then shalt guide my vengeance,——to this first,
And vilest of its victims.

Alz. Find him, here——— :

Black in my breast, he lives : strike, strike, and reach him.

Zam. Hold, heart——and break not yet——This may
be——pity.

Alz. Strike—for—I merit neither life,—nor thee.

Zam. Ezmont, I feel thee ; and believe thee all !

Alz. Did he then tell thee ?—Had my father power
To dwell so sadly on my hopeless woes,
As to describe 'em to thee ?——Did he name
The dreadful husband—his lost daughter owes him ?

Zam. No—but thou may'st : for that will harden Za-
That he shall never be astonish'd more ! [mor,

Alz. Yes—I will tell it thee—Prepare to tremble :
Not for thyself to tremble,——but for me.

I will

I will lay open the vast horror to thee :
Then thou wilt weep and live ; —and bid me—die.

Zam. Alzira ! ——— Oh ! ———

Alz. This Carlos. ———

Zam. Carlos !

Alz. He. ———

I was this morning sworn forever ——— his !

Zam. Sworn whose ? ——— not Carlos ?

Alz. I have been betray'd.

I was too weak alone, ——— against my country.

—— Even on this fatal, this foreboding day,

Almost within thy sight, Christian Alzira

Plighted, in presence of the Christian God,

Her hapless hand to Carlos. ——— 'Tis a crime,

That hopes no pardon ! ——— All my gods renounc'd !

My lover wrong'd ! my country's fame betray'd !

All, all, demand revenge. — Do thou then kill me :

Thou wilt strike tenderly ——— and my glad blood

Shall meet thy dear-lov'd hand ——— and that way join thee.

Zam. Carlos, Alzira's husband ! ——— 'tis impossible !

Alz. Were I dispos'd to mitigate my crime,

I cou'd alledge a father's awful power ;

I cou'd remind thee of our ruin'd state :

And plead my tears, my struggles, and distraction :

Till three long wretched years confirm'd thee dead.

I cou'd, with justice, charge my faith renounc'd

On hatred of those gods, who sav'd not Zamor.

But I disclaim excuse, ——— to shun remission.

I owe finds me guilty ; and that guilt condemns me.

Since thou art safe, no matter what I suffer,

When life has lost the joys that make it bless'd,

—— The shortest liver is the happiest always.

Why dost thou view me with so kind an eye ?

Thou should'st look sternly, and retract all pity.

Zam. No, ——— if I still am lov'd, thou art not guilty.

—— Wishing me bless'd, methinks thou mak'st me so.

Alz. When, by my father urg'd, and by Alvarez,

And my too impell'd, perhaps, to fate,

By some forsaken god, who meant revenge :

When by the Christian's fears, and my touch'd heart,

At once beset, they dragg'd me to the temple,

Even in the moment when advancing Carlos

Sought

Sought my escaping hand, though I then thought thee
 Dead, and for ever lost to my fond hopes :
 Yet then, beneath the altar's sacred gloom,
 I bow'd my soul to Zamor : memory
 Reliev'd me, with thy image. — Indians, Spaniards,
 All, all have heard, how ardently I lov'd thee,
 'Twas my heart's pride to boast it to the world !
 To earth, to heav'n, — to Carlos, I proclaim'd it !
 And now, e'en now, in this distressful moment,
 For the last time, — I tell thyself, I love thee.

Zam. For the last time ! Avert the menace, Heav'n !
 Art thou at once restor'd — and lost again !
 'Tis not love's language, this ! — Alas, Alzira !

Alz. Oh, Heaven ! — Alvarez comes, and with him
 Carlos.

Enter Don Alvarez, followed by Don Carlos.

Alv. See ! with Alzira there, my life's restorer !
 Approach, young hero ! 'tis my son who seeks thee ;
 Spain's delegate, who here holds power supreme :
 My Carlos, bids thee share his bridal joy.
 — Meet, and embrace : divide your father's love :
 My son, of nature, one — and one of choice.

Zam. Nam'd he not Carlos ? — Perish such a son,
 As the detested Carlos !

Alz. Heaven avert
 The rising tempest, that o'erwhelms my soul !

Alv. What means this wonder ?

Zam. 'Tis not possible ! —
 No — I wou'd disbelieve attesting gods,
 Shou'd they, from heaven, assert this shock to nature ;
 That such a father — can — have such a son !

D. Car. [To Zamor.] Slave ! — from what spring
 does thy blind fury rise ?

Know'st thou not who I am ?

Zam. Thou art — a villain.

My country's horror — and whole nature's shame !
 Among the scourges whom just Heaven has left thee,
 now me, for Zamor.

D. Car. Thou, Zamor ?

Alv. Zamor !

Zam. Yes — the tortur'd Zamor.
 I shou'd to be told it ; and remember, with it,

The

The bloody rage of thy remorseless cruelty;
 That basely dar'd insult a yielded captive!
 Now he returns——triumphant in distress,
 To look thee into shame: to see those eyes
 Fall their stretch'd fierceness, and decline before him.
 Thou waster of the world! Thou licens'd robber!
 Thou whose last spoil was my Alzira's glory!
 Win her against this sword: [*Draws.*]---the sole good
 Zamor can boast he owes thy haughty country! [*gain,*
 Now the same hand, that gave the father life,
 Claims, in return, the son's devoted blood:
 And, so reveng'd, atones a dying realm.

Alv. Confounded and amaz'd, I hear him speak;
 And every word grows stranger!——Carlos cannot
 Be guilty——or, if guilty, cannot answer.

D. Car. To answer, is a poorness I despise.
 Where rebels dare accuse, should power reply,
 'Twou'd but forget to punish.——With this sword,
 I might; but that I know the reverence due
 To your protecting presence, well have answer'd.
 ---Madam, [*To Alzira.*] your heart shou'd have instructed
 Why you offend me, while I see you here. [*you,*
 If not my peace, at least your fame, demands
 That you now drive this outlaw from your thoughts.
 You weep then! and insult me with your tears?
 And yet I love, and can be jealous of you!

Alz. Cruel! [*To Carlos.*] and you, [*To Alvarez.*] my
 father, and protector!
 And thou! [*To Zamor.*] my soul's past hope, in hap-
 pier times!

Mark---and condole my fate.——Mix your due pity:
 And tremble, at the horror of my woes.
 Behold this lover, which my father chose me,
 Before I knew there was a world, but ours.
 With his reported death our empire fell:
 And I have liv'd to see my father's throne
 O'erturn'd; and all things chang'd in earth and heav'n!
 By every human help, alas, forsaken,
 At length, my father, from the Christian's God
 Sought help, and screen'd a state, behind his name.
 Compell'd before this unknown power, to kneel,
 A dreadful oath has bound my backward soul,

To love the murd'rer of my real lover !
 In my new faith, I own myself unskill'd,
 But all that virtue taught me, that I know.
 Zamor, I love thee justly : — I confess it.
 What duty calls for, can deserve no shame.
 Yet, where my soul is bound, my heart obeys :
 And I can now be thine, alas, no more.
 Let me be wretched, rather than unjust.
 Carlos, for you, — I am your wife, and victim :
 Yet, in abhorrence of your cruel heart,
 I hold my hand divorc'd ; — and hence abjure you.
 One way to either, I submit, with joy :
 If your swords claim me, I am due to both.
 Which will reward me with the death I wish ?
 Carlos, thou hast a hand already stain'd :
 Thy practis'd poignard need not start at blood.
 Strike then, for due revenge of slighted love ;
 And, punishing the guilty, — once be just.

D. Car. I find then, Madam, you wou'd brave my
 Proud of offending one who must forgive. [weakness !
 But you invoke my vengeance, and it comes.
 Your fate is ready — for, your minion dies.
 Who waits ? — a guard there.

Enter Soldiers.

Alz. Cruel Christian insult !

Alv. My son ! what mean you ? What rash transport
 this ?

Think whom you sentence. — 's his person hateful,
 Yet reverence his virtue and his name.
 He, who is helpless, in his hater's hands,
 Claims safety from his weakness. — Why, why, Carlos,
 Must I, a second time, remind your mercy ?
 I gave you life : — but Zamor gave it me.
 Be warn'd — nor forfeit honour to revenge.

Enter Don Alonzo, with Spanish Soldiers.

Alon. Pardon an entrance, Sir, thus unprepar'd.
 The woods, that border on the neighb'ring plain,
 Pour out a sudden swarm of Indian foes.
 Arm'd they advance, as if to scale our walls :
 And Zamor's name, resounded, rings to heaven.
 Gleamings, from golden bucklers, meet the sun ;
 And in firm line, and close compacted march,

The stretch'd battalions move, in martial justness.
 They hold such discipline, such order'd motion,
 As ne'er was known before to savage foes.
 As if from us they catch'd the lights of war,
 And turn'd the burning lessons on their teachers.

D. Car. Away then : let us think 'em worth our meet-
 ---Heroes of Spain ! ye fav'rite sons of war ! [ing.
 All corners of the world are yours to shine in.
 Help me to teach these slaves to know their masters.
 Bring him along by force.

Zam. Tyrant, they dare not.
 Or, are they gods, who cannot be repell'd ?
 And proof against the wounds, they seek to give ?

D. Car. Surround him.

Alz. Spare him, save him !

Alv. Son, be cool ;
 And still remember what your father owes him.

D. Car. Sir, I remember, 'tis a soldier's duty
 To bear down opposition : so you taught me.

[*Alonzo, and Spanish Soldiers, surround and seize Zamor.*
 Your pardon, Sir,——I go, where honour calls me.

[*Exit, with Zamor, and all the Spanish Soldiers.*

Alz. [To *Alv.*] Low, at your feet, I fall ; your vir-
 tue's claim.

'Tis the first homage fortune yet has taught me.
 Grant me the wish'd release of death's kind hand,
 From miseries, I cannot live to see.

But, dying, let me leave this witness with you,
 That, true to my first vows, I change not lightly.

Two different claimers cannot both possess
 One faithful heart, that can but once be given.

Zamor is mine ; and I am only Zamor's.

Zamor is virtuous, as a fancied angel.

'Twas Zamor gave his life, to good Alvarez !

Alv. I feel the pity of a father for thee.
 I mourn afflicted Zamor : I will guard him :
 I will protect you both, unhappy lovers !
 Yet, ah, be mindful of the marriage tie,
 That, but this morning, bound thy days to Carlos.
 Thou art no longer thine, my mournful daughter.
 Carlos has been too cruel ; but repents it :
 And this once-cruel Carlos is thy husband.

He is my son too ; and he loves us both.

Pity soon softens hearts, where love has enter'd.

Alz. Ah, why did Heav'n not make you Zamor's father ?

Greatness with sweetness join'd, like fire with light,
Each aiding other, mingle warm with bright.
What the kind wants, th' associate strong supplies,
And from the gentle, peace and calmness rise.

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

Don Alvarez and Don Carlos.

Shouts, Trumpets, a long and lofty flourish.

ALVAREZ.

DESERVE, my son, this triumph of your arms,
Your numbers, and your courage, have prevail'd ;
And of this last best effort of the foe,
Half are no more ; and half are yours, in chains.
Disgrace not due success, by undue cruelties :
But call in mercy, to support your fame.
I will go visit the afflicted captives,
And pour compassion on their aching wounds.
Mean while, remember, you are man and Christian.
Bravely, at once, resolve to pardon Zamor.
—Fain wou'd I soften this indocil fierceness :
And teach your courage how to conquer hearts.

D. Car. Your words pierce mine, —freely devote
But leave at liberty my just revenge. [my life,
Pardon him, —Why ! the savage brute is lov'd !

Alv. Th' unhappily belov'd most merit pity.

D. Car. Pity ! —Cou'd I be sure of such reward,
I wou'd die pleas'd, —and she shou'd pity me.

Alv. How much to be lamented is a heart,
At once, by rage of headlong will oppress'd,
And by strong jealousies and doubtings torn !

D. Car. When jealousy becomes a crime —Guard,
Heaven,

That husband's honour, whom his wife not loves !
Your pity takes in all the world—but me.

Alv. Mix not the bitterness of distant fear
With your arriv'd misfortunes.—Since Alzira
Has virtue, it will prove a wiser care
To soften her, for change, by patient tenderness,
Than, by reproach, confirm a willing hate.
Her heart is, like her country, rudely sweet :—
Repelling force, but gentle to be kind.
Softness will soonest bend the stubborn will.

D. Car. Softness !---by all the wrongs of woman's hate,
Too much of softness but invites disdain.
Flatter'd too long, beauty at length grows wanton,
And, insolently scornful, flights its praiser.
Oh, rather, Sir, be jealous for my glory ;
And urge my doubting anger to resolve.
Too low already, condescension bow'd,
Nor blush'd, to match the conqueror with the slave !
But, when this slave, unconscious what she owes,
Proudly repays humility with scorn,
And braves, and hates the un aspiring love,
Such love is weakness :—and submission, there,
Gives sanction to contempt, and rivers pain.

Alv. Thus, youth is ever apt to judge in haste,
And lose the medium in the wild extreme.
Do not repent, but regulate, your passion :
Though love is reason, its excess is rage,
Give me, at least, your promise, to reflect,
In cool, impartial, solitude : and still,
No last decision, till we meet again.

D. Car. It is my father asks—and, had I will,
Nature denies me pow'r, to answer, No.
I will, in wisdom's right, suspend my anger.
—Yet—Spare my loaded heart :—nor add more weight ;
Lest my strength fail beneath th' unequal pressure.

Alv. Grant yourself time, and all you want comes with
it. [Exit.]

D. Car. [Alone.] And—must I coldly then, to pen-
five piety,

Give up the livelier joys of wish'd revenge !
Must I repel the guardian cares of jealousy,
And slacken every rein, to rival love !

Must

Must I reduce my hopes beneath a savage?
 And poorly envy such a wretch as Zamor!
 A coarse luxuriance of spontaneous virtue!
 A shoot of rambling, fierce, offensive freedom:
 Nature's wild growth,---strong, but unprun'd, in daring.
 A rough, raw woodman, of this rugged clime;
 Illit'rate in the arts of polish'd life;
 And who, in Europe, where the fair can judge,
 Wou'd hardly, in our courts, be call'd a man!
 ---She comes!--Alzira comes!--unwish'd--yet charming.

Enter Alzira.

Alz. You turn, and shun me!--So, I have been told,
 Spaniards, by custom, meet submissive wives.

---But, hear me, Sir:---hear, even a suppliant wife;
 Hear this unguilty object of your anger,

One, who can rev'rence, though she cannot love you:

One, who is wrong'd herself, not injures you:

One, who indeed is weak,---and wants your pity.

I cannot wear disguise: be it th' effect

Of greatness, or of weakness, in my mind,

My tongue cou'd ne'er be mov'd, but by my heart:

And that---was vow'd, another's.---If he dies,

The honest plainness of my soul destroys him.

---You look surpriz'd:---I will, still more, surprize you.

I come, to try you deeply---for I mean

To move the husband, in the lover's favour!

---I had half flatter'd my unpractis'd hope,

That you, who govern others, shou'd yourself

Be temp'rate in the use of your own passions.

Nay, I persuaded my unchristian ignorance,

That an ambitious warrior's infelt pride

Shou'd plead in pardon of that pride in others.

---This I am sure of---that, forgiving mercy

Wou'd stamp more influence on our Indian hearts,

Than all our gold on those of men like you.

Who knows, did such a change endear your breast,

How far the pleasing force might soften mine?

Your right secures you my respect and faith;

---Strive for my love:---strive for whatever else

May charm:---if aught there is can charm like love.

---Forgive me: I shall be betray'd by fear,

To promise, till I over-charge my power.---

Yet---try what changes gratitude can make.
 A Spanish wife, perhaps, wou'd promise more :
 Profuse in charms, and prodigal of tears,
 Wou'd promise all things-----and forget 'em all.
 But I have weaker charms, and simpler arts.
 Guileless of soul, and left as nature form'd me,
 I err, in honest innocence of aim,
 And, seeking to compose, inflame you more.
 All I can add, is this :---Unlovely force
 Shall never bow me to reward constraint :
 But---to what lengths I may be led, by benefits,
 'Tis in your pow'r to try : not mine to tell.

D. Car. 'Tis well.---Since justice has such pow'r to
 guide you,
 That you may follow duty, know it first.
 Count modesty among your country's virtues ;
 And copy, not condemn, the wives of Spain.
 'Tis your first lesson, Madam, to forget.
 ---Become more delicate, if not more kind,
 And never let me hear the name I hate.
 ---You shou'd learn, next, to blush away your haste,
 And wait in silence, till my will resolves
 What punishment, or pity, suits his crimes.
 ---Know, last, that (thus provok'd) a husband's clemency
 Out-stretches nature, if it pardons you.
 Learn thence, ungrateful ! that I want not pity :
 And be the last to dare believe me cruel.

[*Exit Don Carlos.*]

Em. Madam, be comforted ;---I mark'd him well ;
 I see, he loves ; and love will make him softer.

Alz. Love has no pow'r to act, when curb'd by jealousy.
 Zamor must die :---for I have ask'd his life.
 Why did not I foresee the likely danger ?
 --But has thy care been happier ?---Canst thou save him ?
 Far, far, divided from me, may he live !
 ---Hast thou made trial of his keeper's faith ?

Em. Gold, that with Spaniards, can outweigh their
 God,

Has bought his hand :---and, so his faith's your own.

Alz. Then Heav'n be bless'd, this metal, form'd for
 Sometimes atones the wrongs 'tis dug to cause ! [crimes,
 ---But, we lose time :---Why dost thou seem to pause ?

Em.

Em. I cannot think they purpose Zamor's death.
 Alvarez has not lost his pow'r so far,
 Nor can the council——

Alz. They are Spaniards all.
 Mark the proud, partial guilt of these vain men :
 Ours, but a country held to yield them slaves :
 Who reign our kings, by right of diff'rent clime.
 Zamor, mean while, by birth, true sovereign here,
 Weighs but a rebel in their righteous scale.
 Oh, civiliz'd assent of social murder !—
 But why, Emira, should this soldier stay ?

Em. We may expect him instantly. The night,
 Methinks, grown darker, veils your bold design.
 Wearied by slaughter, and unwash'd from blood,
 The world's proud spoilers, all lie hush'd in sleep.

Alz. Away, and find this Spaniard. Guilt's bought
 Opening the prison, innocence goes free. [hand

Em. See ! by Cephania led, he comes with Zamor.
 Be cautious, Madam, at so dark an hour,
 Lest, met, suspected honour should be lost ;
 And modesty, mistaken, suffer shame.

Alz. What does thy ill-taught fear mistake for shame ?
 Virtue, at midnight, walks as safe within,
 As in the conscious glare of flaming day.
 She who in forms finds virtue, has no virtue.
 All the shame lies in hiding honest love.
 Honour, the alien phantom, here unknown,
 Lends but a length'ning shade to setting virtue.
 Honour's not love of innocence, but praise ;
 The fear of censure, not the scorn of sin.
 But I was taught, in a sincerer clime,
 That Virtue, tho' it shines not, still is virtue ;
 And inbred honour grows not, but at home.
 This my heart knows ; and, knowing, bids me dare,
 Should Heav'n forsake the just, be bold and save him.

Enter Zamor, with Cephania, and a Spanish Soldier.
 Ah, fly ! thy hopes are lost ; thy torturer's ready.
 Escape this moment, or thou stay'st to die.
 Haste—lose no time—begone : this guardian Spaniard
 Will teach thee to deceive the murderer's hope.
 Reply not ; judge thy fate from my despair ;
 Save, by thy flight, the man I love from death ;

The

The man whom I have sworn t' obey, from blood ;
 And a lost world, that knows thy worth, from tears.
 Thy country calls thee ; night conceals thy steps.
 Pity thy fate, and leave me to my own.

Zam. Thou robber's property ! Thou Christian's wife !
 Thou, who dar'st love me, yet dar'st bid me live !
 If I must live, come thou, to make life tempting.
 But 'twas a cruel wish—How could I shield thee,
 Stript of my power and friends, and nothing left me,
 But wrongs and misery ?—I have no dower
 To tempt reluctant love. All thou canst share
 With me, will be—my desert—and my heart.
 When I had more, I laid it at thy feet.

Alz. Ah, what are crowns that must no more be thine ?
 I lov'd not power, but thee : thyself once lost,
 What has an empty world to tempt my stay ?
 Far in the depth of thy sad deserts, trac'd,
 My heart will seek thee ; Fancy, there, misleads
 My weary, wand'ring steps ; there horror finds,
 And preys upon my solitude ; there leaves me,
 To languish life out in unheard complaints ;
 To waste and wither in the tearless winds ;
 And die with shame at breach of plighted faith,
 For being only thine—and yet another's.
 Go, carry with thee both my peace and life,
 And leave—Ah, would thou couldst !—thy sorrows here.
 I have my lover and my fame to guard,
 And I will save them both——Begone—for ever.

Zam. I hate this fame, false avarice of fancy ;
 The sickly shade of an unsolid greatness ;
 The lying lure of pride, that Europe cheats by :
 Perish the groundless seemings of their virtue !
 But shall forc'd oaths at hated Christians' altars,
 Shall gods, who rob the gods of our forefathers,
 Shall these obtrude a lord, and blast a lover ?

Alz. Since it was sworn, or to your gods or theirs,
 What help is left me ?

Zam. None——Adieu—for ever.

Alz. Stay—What a farewell this ?—Return, [*Going.*]
 I charge thee.

Zam. Carlos, perhaps, will hear thee.

Alz. [*Returning.*] Ah, pity, rather
 Than thus upbraid my wretchedness !

Zam.

Zam. Think, then,
On our past vows.

Alz. I think of nothing now,
But of thy danger.

Zam. Oh, thou hast undone
Th' he tend'rest, fondest lover!—

Alz. Still I love;
Crime as it is, I love thee. Leave me, Zamor,
Leave me alone to die—Ha! cruel! tell me,
What horrible despair, revolving wildly,
Bursts from thy eyes, with purpose more than mortal?

Zam. It shall be so. [Going.]

Alz. What wouldst thou? Whither go'st thou? [Holding him.]

Zam. To make a proper use of unhop'd freedom.

Alz. By heav'n, if 'tis to death, I'll follow thee.

Zam. Horrors, unmix'd with love, demand me now.
Leave me—Time flies—Night blackens—Duty calls.
Soldier, attend my steps. [Exit hastily.]

Alz. Alas, Emira!
I faint—I die—In what ungovern'd start
Of some rash thought he left me?—Haste, Emira,
Watch his fear'd meaning; trace his fatal footsteps;
And, if thou seest him safe, return, and bless me. [Exit Emira.]

A black, presaging sorrow swells my heart!
What could a day like this produce, but woe?
Oh, thou dark, awful, vast, mysterious Power,
Whom Christians worship, yet not comprehend!
If, ignorant of thy new laws, I stray,
Shed from thy distant heav'n, where-e'er it shines,
One ray of guardian light, to clear my way:
And teach me, first to find, then act, thy will.
But, if my only crime is love of Zamor,
If that offends thy sight, and claims thy anger,
Pour thy due vengeance on my hopeless head;
For I am then a wretch, too lost for mercy
Yet, be the wanderer's guide, amidst his desarts!
Greatly dispense thy good with equal hand;
Nor, partial to the partial, give Spain all.
Thou canst not be confin'd to care of parts;
Heedless of one world, and the other's father:
Vanquish'd

Vanquish'd and victors are alike to thee;
 And all our vain distinctions mix before thee.
 Ah, what foreboding shriek!—Again! and louder!
 Oh, heav'n! amidst the wildness of that sound,
 I heard the name of Zamor!—Zamor's lost—
 Hark!—a third time!—And now the mingled cries
 Come quick'ning on my ear!

Enter Emira, frightened.

Emira, save me!
 What has he done?—In pity of my fears,
 Speak, and bestow some comfort.

Em. Comfort is lost:

And all the rage of death has sure possess'd him.
 First, he chang'd habits with the trembling soldier:
 Then snatch'd his weapon from him—The robb'd wretch
 Flew, frightened, toward the gate—while furious Zamor,
 Wild, as the fighting rage of wintry winds,
 Rush'd to the public hall, where sits the council.
 Following, I saw him pass the sleeping guards;
 But lost him when he enter'd. In a moment,
 I heard the sound of voices cry, He's dead.
 Then, clam'rous calls from ev'ry way at once,
 To arms, To arms!—Ah, Madam, stay not here!
 Fly to the inmost rooms, and shun the danger.

Alz. No, dear Elmira; rather let us try,
 Whether our weakness may not find some means,
 Late and unlikely as it is, to save him.
 I, too, dare die.

Em. They come——Protect us, Heaven!

Enter Don Alonzo.

Alon. Madam, you stir no farther—I have orders
 To seize your person. 'Tis a charge unwish'd.

Alz. Whence dost thou come? What fury sent thee
 What is become of Zamor? [hither?

Alon. At a time
 So full of danger, my respect gives way
 To duty.—You must please to follow me.

Alz. Oh, Fortune, Fortune!—This is too severe!
 Zamor is dead, and I am only captive!
 Why dost thou weep? What have a Spaniard's tears
 To do with woes, which none but Spaniards cause?

Come;

Come ; if to death thou lead'st me, 'twill be kind :
There only, weakness wrong'd, can refuge find.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the FOURTH ACT.

A C T V.

Alzira, guarded.

ALZIRA.

AM I to die ? Answer, ye dumb destroyers !
Ye wretches, who provoke, yet mock at Heaven ;
And when you mean to murder, say you judge !
Why does your brutal silence leave my soul
Flutt'ring, 'twixt hope and fear, in torturing doubt ?
Why am I not inform'd of Zamor's fate ?
They will not speak—No matter—She who hopes
To hear no good, why should she hear at all ?
The conduct of these watchful mutes is strange.
They seize me, guard me, and confine me here ;
Yet answer nothing, but with looks of hate.
Chancing, but now, to sigh my Zamor's name,
Ev'n these low monsters, struck with Spanish envy,
Started, turn'd pale, and trembled at the sound.

Enter Ezmont.

Alas !—my father, too !

Ezm. To what dark depth
Of sad despair, hast thou reduc'd us all ?
See now, the fruits of thy unlift'ning love !
Even in the instant, while, with growing hope,
We pleaded earnest for the life of Zamor ;
While we yet hung on the half-granted prayer ;
An ent'ring foldier drew our notice toward him.
'Twas Zamor—dreadful, in a borrow'd dress !
At once he hurl'd his furious eyes amongst us,
And his more furious person. Scarce I saw,
So rapid was his motion, that his hand
Held a drawn sword. To enter, reach our seats,
And, lion-like, spring to the breast of Carlos ;
'Th' assault, the wound, the death, was all one moment.
Out gush'd your husband's blood, to stain your father,

As

For this sole blow, that could have broke my chain.
 Think that this period of suppos'd distress,
 This moment, that unites us, tho' in death,
 Is the first time my love was free from woe.
 The smiling fate restores me to myself;
 And I can give a heart, now all my own.
 If there's a cause for tears, Alvarez claims 'em:
 I while he speaks our doom; shall feel but his. [sings.]

Zam. See where the mourner comes; and weeps his er-

Enter Alvarez.

Alv. Which of us three, does fortune most distress?
 What an assemblage ours, of mingled woes?

Zam. Since Heaven will have it so, that, from thy
 I should receive Death's summons, let it come: [tongue,
 'Twill have one power to please—for I shall hear thee.

Do not then pity, but condemn me boldly;
 And, if thy heart, the Spanish, bends beneath it,
 Think thou but doom'd an unsubmitting savage,
 Who kill'd thy son, because he kill'd his father.

But what has poor Alzira done against thee?
 Why must she die in whom a people lives;
 In whom alone glows that collected soul,
 That, in past ages, brighten'd all Peru?
 Is innocence a crime where Spaniards judge?
 Known, and assum'd by us, for all thy virtues,
 The jealous envy of thy land reclaims thee,
 And crops thy Indian growth, to creep like Spain.

Alz. Wond'rous old virtue! obstinately kind!
 Thou, singly just, amidst a race of thieves!
 'Twere to be base as they are, could I stoop
 To deprecate a vengeance duly thine.
 For thy son's blood be mine the willing sacrifice.
 All I require is but escape from slander;
 From poor suspicion of a guilt I scorn.
 Carlos, tho' hated, was a hated husband;
 Whence, even my hatred ow'd his life defence.
 He was Alvarez' son too; and, as such,
 Call'd for that reverence which himself deserv'd not.
 As for thy nation, let them praise or blame me;
 Thy witness only can be worth my claim.
 As for my death, 'tis joy to die with Zamor:
 And all the pain I suffer—is for thee.

Alv. Words will have way ; or grief, suppress'd in vain,
 Would burst its passage with th' out-rushing soul.
 Whose sorrows ever match'd this mingled scene
 Of tenderness with horror ? My son's murderer
 Is Zamor : he who guarded me from murder,
 Is also Zamor. Hold that image fast,
 Afflicted nature. Life, unwish'd by me
 Is due to Zamor. Young, below'd, untry'd
 In hope's false failings, life might make him happy.
 My taste of time is gone ; and life, to me,
 Is but an evening's walk in rain and darkness.
 Father I am (at least I was a father) ;
 But every father first was form'd a man :
 And, spite of nature's call, that cries for vengeance,
 The voice of gratitude must still be heard.
 Oh, thou, so late my daughter ! thou, whom yet,
 Spite of these tears, I call by that lov'd name !
 Mistake not my pursuit. I cannot taste
 Those horrible reliefs that rise from blood.
 It shocks me thro' a soul that feels for three.
 Hard stroke of justice ! thus to lose at once,
 My daughter, my deliverer, and my son.
 The council, with misguided view to sooth me,
 Ill chose my tongue to tell their dreadful will.
 True, I receiv'd the charge ; for I had weigh'd it.
 'Twere not impossible, perhaps, to save you :
 Zamor might make it easy.

Zam. Can I do it ?

Can Zamor save Alzira ? Quickly tell me
 How, by what length of torments, and 'tis done ?

Alv. Cast off thy idol gods, and be a Christian :
 That single change reverses all our fates.
 Kind to the courted souls of Pagan converts,
 We have a law remits their body's doom.
 This latent law, by Heaven's peculiar mercy,
 Points out a road, and gives a right to pardon.
 Religion can disarm a Christian's anger.
 Thy blood becomes a brother's, so converted,
 And with a living son repays a dead.
 Prevented vengeance, seiz'd in her descent,
 So rests suspended, and forgets to fall.
 From thy new faith, Alzira draws new life ;

And both are happy here, and sav'd hereafter.
 Why art thou silent? Is the task so hard,
 To add eternal life, to life below?
 Speak——from thy choice, determine my relief,
 Fain wou'd I owe thee yet a second being.
 Yes——to restore the life thou robb'st me of,
 A childless father wishes thee to live.
 Alzira is a Christian; be thou so.

'Tis all the recompence my wrongs will urge.

Zam. [*To Alzira.*] Shall we, thou fairest, noblest
 boast of beauty!

Shall we so far indulge our fear to die?
 Shall the soul's baseness bid the body live?
 Shall *Zamor's* gods bow to the gods of *Carlos*?
 Why wou'd *Alvarez* bend me down to shame?
 Why wou'd he thus become the spirit's tyrant?
 Into how strange a snare am I impell'd!
 Either *Alzira* dies, or lives to scorn me!
 Tell me——When fortune gave thee to my power,
 Had I, at such a purchase, held thy life,
 Tell me, with honest truth--wou'd thou have bought it?

Alv. I shou'd have pray'd the power, I now implore,
 To widen, for his truth, a heart like thine:
 Dark as it is, yet worthy to be Christian.

Zam. [*To Alzira.*] Death has no pain, but what I
 feel for thee.

Life has no power to charm, but what thou giv'st it.

Thou, then, art my soul, vouchsaf'd to guide it.

But, think!--remember, ere thou bid'st me chide!

'Tis on a matter of more weight than life;

'Tis on a subject that concerns my gods:

And all those gods in one--my dear *Alzira*!

I trust it to thy honour--Speak--and fix me.

If thou conceiv'st it shame, thou wilt disdain it.

Alz. Then, hear me, *Zamor*---My unhappy father
 Dispos'd my willing heart, 'twixt heaven and thee:

The God, he chose, was mine!--thou may'st, perhaps,
 Accuse it, as the weakness of my youth:

But, 'twas not so. My soul, enlarg'd, and clear,

Took in the solemn light of Christian truth.

I saw--at least, I thought I saw, conviction.

And, when my lips abjur'd my country's gods,

My

My secret heart confirm'd the change within.
 But had I wanted that directive zeal,
 Had I renounc'd my gods, yet still believ'd 'em;
 That——had not been error, but a crime:
 That had been mocking Heaven's whole host, at once;
 The powers I quitted, and the power I chose.
 A chang'd like that, had err'd, beyond the tongue:
 And taught the silent, servile soul, to lie.
 I cou'd have wish'd, that Heaven had lent thee light,
 But since it did not——let thy virtue guide thee.

Zam. I knew thy gen'rous choice, before I heard it.
 Who, that can die with thee, wou'd shun such death,
 And live to his own infamy?——Not Zamor.

Alv. Inhuman slights of yourselves and me!
 Whom honour renders blind, and virtue cruel!

[*A dead march.*]

Hark!--the time presses.---These are sounds of sorrow.

Enter Don Alonzo, followed by a mixed Crowd of Spaniards and Americans, mournful.

Alon. We bring obedience to his last command,
 Our dying captain, your unhappy son,
 Who lives no longer, than to reach your bosom.
 A furious crowd of his lamenting friends
 Press, to attend him, and revenge his blood.

Enter Don Carlos, brought in by Spanish Soldiers, and surrounded by a Number of followers, some of whom advance, to seize Alzira.

Zam. [*Interposing.*] Wretches! keep distance.——Let Alzira live;

Mine was the single guilt——be mine the vengeance.

Alz. Be feasted, ye officious hounds of blood:
 Guiltless or guilty, 'tis my choice to die.

Alv. My son! my dying son!--this silent paleness,
 This look, speaks for thee, and forbids all hope.

Zam. [*To Don Carlos.*] Even to the last then, thou maintain'st thy hate?

Come---see me suffer; mark my eye; and scorn me,
 If my expiring soul confesses fear.

Look---and be taught, at least, to die---by Zamor.

D. Car. [*To Zamor.*] I have no time to copy out thy virtues:

But, there are some of mine, I come to teach thee.

I shou'd, in life, have given thy pride example :
Take it, too late, in death ; and mark it well.

[To Alv.] Sir, my departing spirit staid its journey,
First, 'till my eyes might leave their beams in yours ;
And their dim lights expire, amidst your blessing.
Next, what you taught me, 'tis my task to show,
And die the son of your paternal virtue.

——Eager in life's warm race, I never stopp'd
To look behind me, and review my way.

But, at the goal, before I judg'd it near,
I start——and recollect forgotten slidings.

On the grave's serious verge, I turn——and see
Humanity oppress'd, to cherish pride :

Heaven has reveng'd the earth :——and Heav'n is just !
Cou'd my own blood but expiate what I shed,
All my rash sword has drawn from suff'ring innocence,
I shou'd lie down in dust——and rest in peace.

Cheated by prosp'rous fortune, death deals plainly ;
But——I have learnt to live, when life forsakes me.
Safe and forgiven, be the hand I fall by.

Power is yet mine ; and it absolves my murder.

Live, my proud enemy ; and live in freedom :

Live——and observe, tho' Christians oft act ill,
They must forgive ill actions in another.

——Ezmont, my friend ! and you, ye friendless Indians !
Subjects, not slaves ! be rul'd henceforth by law.

Be grateful to my pity, though 'twas late ;
And teach your country's kings to fear no longer.

——Rival, learn hence the difference 'twixt our gods ;
Thine have inspir'd thee to pursue revenge :

But mine, when that revenge had reach my life,
Command me to esteem, and give thee pardon.

Alv. Virtues like these, my son, secure thy peace :
But double the distress of us who lose thee.

Alz. Of all the painful wonders thou hast caus'd me,
This change, this language, will afflict me most !

Zam. Die soon, or live for ever.—If thou thus
Go'st on, to charm my anger into envy,

I shall repent, I was not born a Christian,
And hate the justice that compell'd my blow !

D. Car. I will go farther yet ;——I will not leave thee,
Till I have soften'd envy into friendship.

—My

—Mournful Alzira has been too unhappy :
 Lov'd to distress, and married to misfortune !
 I wou'd do something to atone her wrongs ;
 And with a softer sense, imprint her pity.
 Take her — and owe her to the hand she hates.
 Live — and remember me without a curse.
 Resume lost empire o'er your conquer'd states :
 Be friends to Spain : — nor enemies to me.
 [To Alvarez.] — Vouchsafe my claim, Sir, to this son,
 this daughter :

And be both father and protector too.
 May Heaven and you be kind ! and they be Christians !

Zam. I stand immoveable — confus'd — astonish'd !
 If these are Christian virtues, I am Christian.
 The faith that can inspire this gen'rous change,
 Must be divine, — and glows with all its God !
 — Friendship, and constancy, and right, and pity,
 All these were lessons I had learnt before.

But this unnatural grandeur of the soul
 Is more than mortal ; and outreaches virtue.
 It draws — it charms — it binds me to be Christian.
 It bids me blush at my remember'd rashness :
 Curse my revenge — and pay thee all my love.

[*Throws himself at his feet*]

Alx. A widow'd wife, blushing to be thus late,
 In her acknowledgment of tender pity ;
 Low, at your injur'd feet, with prostrate heart,

[*Kneels with Zamor.*]

Weeps your untimely death ; and thanks your goodness.
 — Torn by contending passions, I want power
 To speak a thousand truths, I see you merit :
 But honour and confess your greatness wrong'd.

D. Car. Weep not, Alzira — I forgive again.
 — For the last time, my father, lend your bosom.
 Live to be bless'd ! — and make Alzira so !

Remember, Zamor — that a Christian — Oh ! [Dies.]

Alv. [To Ezmont.] I see the hand of Heaven in our
 misfortune.

But justice strikes ; and sufferers must submit.

Woes are good counsellors ; and kindly show,
 What prosperous error never lets us know.

E P I L O G U E.

Spoken by ALZIRA.

*THE Fifth Act pass'd, you'll think it strange to find
 My scene of deep distress is yet behind.
 Task'd for the epilogue, I fear you'll blame
 My want—of what you love, behind that name.
 But, for my soul, I can't, from such high scening,
 Descend, plum down at once—to double-meaning.
 Judges! protect me—and pronounce it fit,
 That solemn sense, shou'd end with serious wit.
 When the full heart o'erflows with pleasing pain,
 Why should we wish to make th' impression vain?
 Why, when two thinking hours have fix'd the play,
 Shou'd two light minutes, laugh its use away?
 'Twere to proclaim our virtues but a jest,
 Should they who ridicule 'em, please us best.
 No—rather, at your actor's hands require
 Off'rings more apt; and a sublimer fire!
 Thoughts that may rivet, not efface, the scene:
 Aids to the mind; not flat'ries for the spleen.
 When love, hate, pity,—doubt, hope, grief, and rage,
 With clashing influence, fire the glowing stage;
 When the touch'd heart, relenting into woe,
 From others fate, does its own danger know:
 When soft'ning tenderness unlocks the mind,
 And the stretch'd bosom takes in all mankind:
 Sure, 'tis no time, for the bold hand of wit
 To snatch back virtues from the plunder'd pit.
 Still be it ours, to give you scenes thus strong,
 And yours to cherish, and retain 'em long!
 Then shall the stage its general use endear;
 And every virtue gather firmness here.
 Pow'r be to pardon,—wealth to pity mov'd;
 And truth be taught the art; to grow belov'd:
 Women to charm, with fast and sure effect;
 And men to love 'em with a soft respect.
 Till all alike, some diff'rent motive rouses;
 And tragedy, unsarc'd, invites full houses.*

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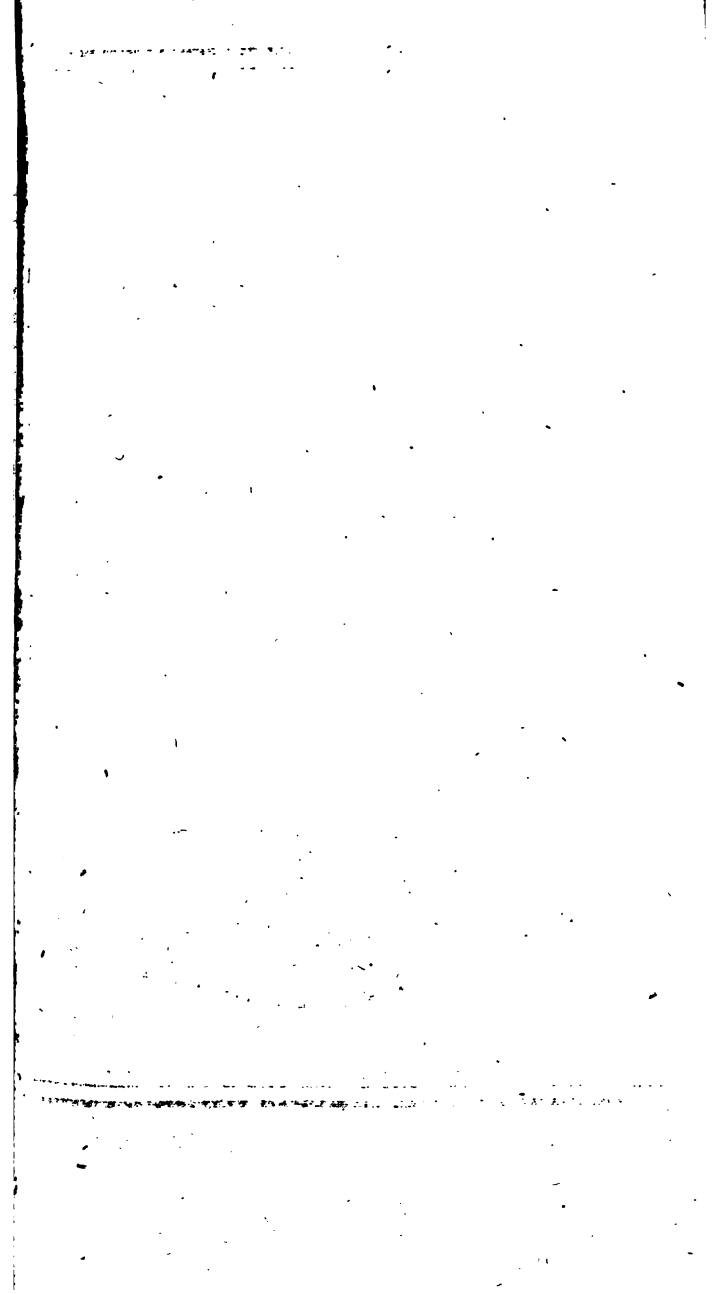
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Now, all ye kindred Gods, look down and see
How I'll revenge you, and myself on Phædra.

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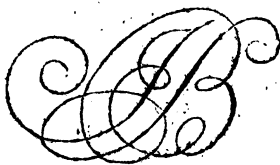
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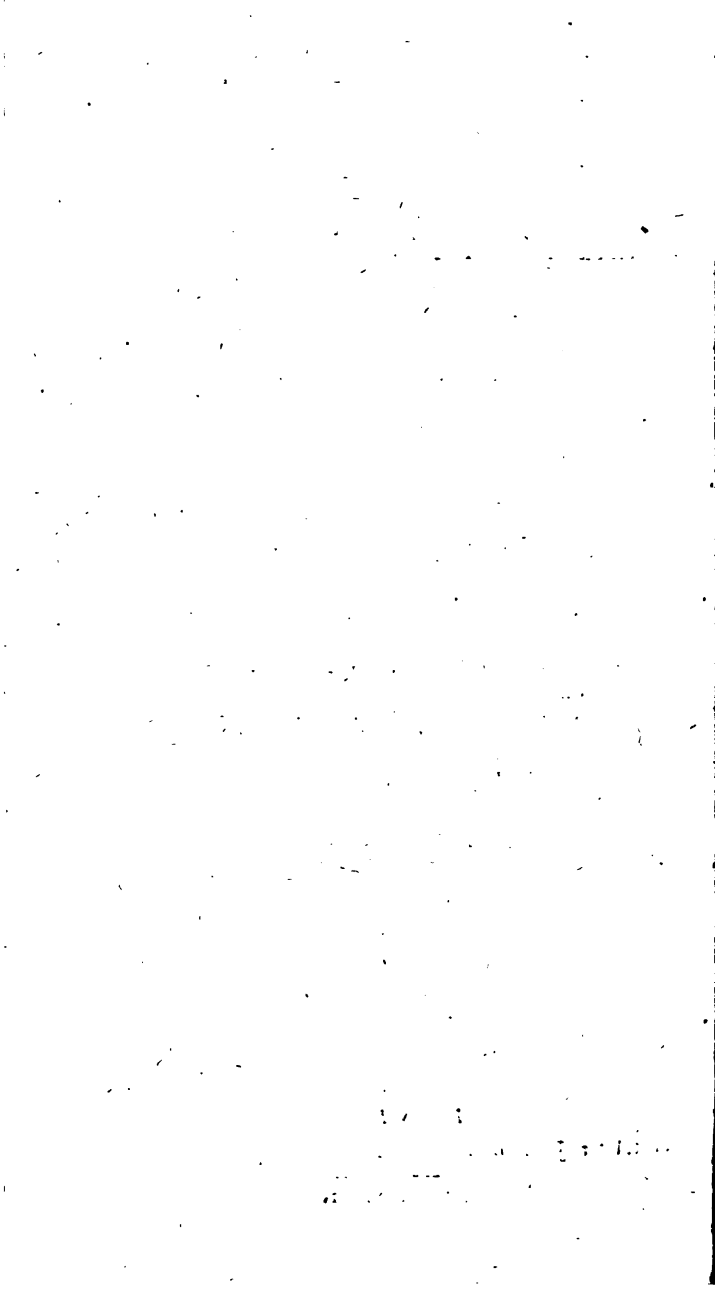
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MDCCLXXVII.



To the Right Honourable

C H A R L E S.

L O R D H A L I F A X.

MY LORD,

AS soon as it was made known that your Lordship was not displeased with this play, my friends began to value themselves upon the interest they had taken in its success: I was touched with a vanity I had not before been acquainted with, and began to dream of nothing less than the immortality of my work.

And I had sufficiently shewn this vanity in inscribing this play to your Lordship, did I only consider you as one to whom so many admirable pieces, to whom the praises of Italy, and the best Latin poem since the *Æneid*, that on the peace of Ryswick, are consecrated. But it had been intolerable presumption to have addressed it to you, my lord, who are the nicest judge of poetry, were you not also the greatest encourager of it; to you who excel all the present age as a poet, did you not surpass all the preceding ones as a patron.

For in the times when the Muses were most encouraged, the best writers were countenanced, but never advanced; they were admitted to the acquaintance of the greatest men, but that was all they were to expect. The bounty of the patron is no where to be read of, but in the works of poets; whereas your Lordship's will fill those of the historians.

For, what transactions can they write of, which have not been managed by some who were recommended by your Lordship? It is by your Lordship's means, that the universities have been real nurseries for the state; that the courts abroad are charmed by the wit and learning, as well as the sagacity of our ministers; that Germany, Switzerland, Muscovy, and even Turkey itself, begins to

relish the politeness of the English; that the poets at home adorn that court, which they formerly used only to divert; that abroad they travel, in a manner very unlike their predecessor, *Homer*, and with an equipage he could not bestow, even on the heroes he designed to immortalize.

And this, my Lord, shews your knowledge of men, as well as writings, and your judgment no less than your generosity; you have distinguished between those, who, by their inclinations or abilities were qualified for the pleasure only, and those that were fit for the service of your country; you made the one easy, and the other useful: you have left the one no occasion to wish for any preferment, and you have obliged the public by the promotion of the others.

And now, my Lord, it may seem odd that I should dwell on the topic of your bounty only, when I might enlarge on so many others; when I ought to take notice of that illustrious family from which you are sprung, and yet of the great merit which was necessary to set you on a level with it, and to raise you to that house of peers, which was already filled with your relations; when I ought to consider the brightness of your wit in private conversation, and the solidity of your eloquence in public debates; when I ought to admire in you the politeness of a courtier, and the sincerity of a friend; the openness of behaviour, which charms all who address themselves to you; and yet that hidden reserve, which is necessary for those great affairs in which you are concerned.

To pass over all these great qualities, my Lord, and insist only on your generosity, looks as if I solicited it for myself; but to that I quitted all manner of claim, when I took notice of your Lordship's great judgment in the choice of those you advance; so that all, at present, my ambition aspires to is, that your Lordship would be pleased to pardon this presumption, and permit me to profess myself, with the most profound respect,

Your Lordship's most humble,

And most obedient servant,

EDM. SMITH.

PRO.

P R O L O G U E.

Written by Mr. ADDISON.

LONG has a race of heroes fill'd the stage,
 That rant by note; and thro' the gamut rage :
 In songs and airs express their martial fire,
 Combat in trills, and in a feuge expire;
 While, lull'd by sound, and undisturb'd by wit,
 Calm and serene you indolently sit;
 And from the dull fatigue of thinking free,
 Hear the facetious fiddles repartee:
 Our homespun authors must forsake the field,
 And Shakspeare to the soft Scarlatti yield.
 To your new taste the poet of this day,
 Was by a friend advis'd to form his play:
 Had Valentini, musically coy,
 Shunn'd Phædra's arms, and scorn'd the proffer'd joy,
 It had not mov'd your wonder to have seen
 An eunuch fly from an enamour'd queen:
 How would it please, should she in English speak,
 And could Hippolitus reply in Greek?
 But he, a stranger to your modish way,
 By your old rules must stand or fall to-day;
 And hopes you will your foreign taste command,
 To bear, for once, with what you understand.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

Covent-Garden.

<i>Theseus</i> , King of Crete,	—	Mr. Barry.
<i>Hippolitus</i> , his son, in love with <i>Ismena</i> ,		Mr. Lewis.
<i>Lycon</i> , minister of state,	—	Mr. Lee.
<i>Cratander</i> , captain of the guards,		Mr. Aickin.

W O M E N.

<i>Phædra</i> , Theseus's queen, in love with		
<i>Hippolitus</i> ,	—	— Mrs. Barry.
<i>Ismena</i> , a captive princess, in love with		
<i>Hippolitus</i> .	—	— Mrs. Bulkley.

Guards, Attendants.

PHÆDRA and HIPPOLITUS.

* * The lines distinguished by inverted commas, 'thus,' are omitted in the Representation, and those printed in *Italics* are the additions of the Theatre.

A C T I.

Enter Cratander and Lycon.

LYCON.

TIS strange, Cratander, that the royal Phædra
Should still continue resolute in grief,
And obstinately wretched :

That one so gay, so beautiful and young,
Of godlike virtue and imperial power,
Should fly inviting joys, and court destruction.

Crat. Is there not cause, when lately join'd in marriage,
To have the king her husband call'd to war ;
Then for three tedious moons to mourn his absence,
Nor know his fate ?

Lyc. The king may cause her sorrow,
But not by absence : oft I've seen him hang
With greedy eyes, and languish o'er her beauties :
She from his wide, deceiv'd, desiring arms
Flew tasteless, loathing ; whilst dejected Theseus,
With mournful, loving eyes pursu'd her flight,
And dropt a silent tear.

Crat. Ha ! this is hatred,
This is aversion, horror, detestation.
Why did the queen, who might have cull'd mankind,
Why did she give her person and her throne
To one she loath'd ?

Lyc. Perhaps she thought it just
That he should wear the crown his valour sav'd.

Crat. Could she not glut his hopes with wealth and
Reward his valour, yet reject his love ? [honour ?
Why,

Why, when a happy mother, queen and widow,
 Why did she wed old Theseus, while his son,
 The brave Hippolitus, with equal youth,
 And equal beauty, might have fill'd her arms?

Lyc. Hippolitus, (in distant Scythia born,
 The warlike Amazon, Camilla's son)
 Till our queen's marriage, was unknown to Crete:
 And sure the queen could wish him still unknown:
 She loaths, detests him, flies his hated presence,
 And shrinks and trembles at his very name.

Crat. Well may she hate the prince she needs must fear:
 He may dispute the crown with Phædra's son.
 He's brave, he's fiery, youthful, and lov'd;
 His courage charms the men, his form the women;
 His very sports are war.

Lyc. Oh, he's all hero! scorns th' inglorious ease
 Of lazy Crete; delights to shine in arms,
 To wield the sword, and launch the pointed spear;
 To tame the gen'rous horse, that, nobly wild,
 Neighs on the hills, and dares the angry lion;
 ' To join the struggling coursers to his chariot,
 ' To make their stubborn necks the rein obey,
 ' To turn, or stop, or stretch along the plain.'

Now the queen's sick, there's danger in his courage—
He must be watch'd.

Be ready with your guards—I fear Hippolitus.

[*Exit Crat.*]

Fear him! for what? Poor, silly, virtuous wretch!
 Affecting glory, and contemning power:
 Warm without pride, without ambition brave;
 A senseless hero, fit to be a tool
 To those whose godlike souls are turn'd for empire.
 An open, honest fool, that loves and hates,
 And yet more fool to own it. He hates flatterers;
 He hates me too: weak boy, to make a foe,
 Where he might have a slave. I hate him too;
 But cringe and flatter, fawn, adore, yet hate him.
 Let the queen live or die, the prince must fall.

Enter Ismena.

What, still attending on the queen, Ismena?
 Oh, charming virgin! Oh, exalted virtue!
 Can still your goodness conquer all your wrongs?

Are

PHÆDRA AND HIPPOLITUS

Are you not robb'd of your Athenian crown?
Was not your royal father, Pallas, slain,
And all his wretched race, by conqu'ring Theseus?
And do you still watch o'er his consort, Phædra?
And still repay such cruelty with love?

Ism. Let them be cruel that delight in mischief:
I'm of a foster mold. Poor Phædra's sorrows
Pierce thro' my yielding heart, and wound my soul.

Lyc. Now thrice the rising sun has cheer'd the world,
Since she renew'd her strength with due refreshment;
Thrice has the night brought ease to man, to beast,
Since wretched Phædra clos'd her streaming eyes:
' She flies all rest, all necessary food,
' Resolv'd to die, nor capable to live.'

Ism. But now her grief has wrought her into frenzy;
The images her troubled fancy forms
Are incoherent, wild; her words disjointed:
Sometimes she raves for music, light and air;
Nor air, nor light, nor music calm her pains;
Then with extatic strength she springs aloft,
And moves and bounds with vigour not her own.

Lyc. Then life is on the wing; then most she sinks,
When most she seems reviv'd. Like boiling water,
That foams and hisses o'er the crackling wood,
And bubbles to the brim; ev'n then most wasting,
When most it swells.

Ism. My lord, now try your art;
Her wild disorder may disclose the secret
Her cooler sense conceal'd; ' the Pythian goddess
' Is dumb and sullen, till, with fury fill'd,
' She spreads, she rises, growing to the fight,
' She stares, she foams, she raves; the awful secrets
' Burst from her trembling lips, and ease the tortur'd
maid.'

But Phædra comes; ye gods, how pale, how weak!

Enter Phædra and Attendants.

Phæd. Stay, virgins, stay; I'll rest my weary steps.
My strength forsakes me, and my dazzled eyes
Ake with the flashing light; my loosen'd knees
Sink under their dull weight. Support me, Lycôn.
Alas, I faint!

Lyc. Afford her ease, kind Heav'n! [head]

Phæd. Why blaze these jewels round my wretched
Why

50 PHÆDRA AND HIPPOLITUS.

' Why all this labour'd elegance of dress ?
' Why flow these wanton curls in artful rings ?'
Take, snatch them hence. Alas ! you all conspire
To heap new sorrows on my tortur'd soul :
All, all conspire to make your queen unhappy.

Lady. This you requir'd, and to the pleasing task
Call'd your officious maids, and urg'd their art ;
You bid them lead you from yon hideous darkness,
To the glad chearing day ; yet now avoid it,
And hate the light you sought.

Phæd. Oh, my Lycon !
Oh, how I long to lay my weary head
On tender flow'ry beds, and springing grafs !
To stretch my limbs beneath the spreading shades
Of venerable oaks ; to slake my thirst
With the cool nectar of refreshing springs.

Lyc. I'll sooth her frenzy. Come, Phædra, let's away ;
Let's to the woods, and lawns, and limpid streams.

Phæd. Come, let's away ; and thou, most bright Diana,
Goddess of woods, immortal, chaste Diana,
' Goddess presiding o'er the rapid race,'
Place me, Oh, place me in the dusty ring,
Where youthful charioteers contend for glory !
See how they mount, and shake the flowing reins ;
See from the goal the fiery coursers bound ;
Now they strain panting up the steepy hill,
Now sweep along its top, now neigh along the vale ;
How the car rattles, how its kindling wheels
Smoke in the whirl ! the circling sand ascends,
And in the noble dust the chariot's lost.

Lyc. What, Madam ?

Phæd. Ah, my Lycon ! Ah ! what said I ?
Where was I hurry'd by my roving fancy ?
My languid eyes are wet with sudden tears,
And on my cheeks unbidden blushes glow.

Lyc. Then blush ; but blush for your destructive silence,
That tears your soul, and weighs you down to death.
Oh, should you die ! (ye pow'rs forbid her death !)
Who then would shield from wrongs your helpless orphan ?
He then might wander, Phædra's son might wander,
A naked suppliant, thro' the world, for aid.
' Then he may cry, invoke his mother's name :

' He

' He may be doom'd to chains, to shame, to death,
While proud Hippolitus ' shall mount his throne.'

Phæd. Oh, Heav'ns!

Lyc. Ha, Phædra! are you touch'd at this? [spoke?

Phæd. Unhappy wretch! What name was that you

Lyc. And does his name provoke your just resentments?

Then let it raise your fear, as well as wrath:

Think how you wrong'd him, to his father wrong'd him;

Think how you drove him hence, a wand'ring exile,

To distant climes; then think what certain vengeance

His rage may wreak on your unhappy orphan.

For his sake then renew your drooping spirits;

Feed with new oil the wasting lamp of life,

That winks and trembles, now, just now expiring:

Make haste, preserve your life.

Phæd. Alas! too long,

Too long have I preserv'd that guilty life.

Lyc. Guilty! What guilt? Has blood, has horrid murder
Imbru'd your hands? [der

Phæd. Alas, my hands are guiltless!

But, Oh, my heart's defil'd!

I've said too much; forbear the rest, my Lycon;

And let me die, to save the black confession.

Lyc. Die, then, but not alone; old faithful Lycon
Shall be a victim to your cruel silence.

Will you not tell! Oh, lovely, wretched queen!

' By all the cares of your first infant years;

By all the love, and faith, and zeal I've shewn you,

Tell me your griefs, unfold your hidden sorrows,

And teach your Lycon how to bring you comfort.

' *Phæd.* What shall I say, malicious, cruel pow'rs?

' Oh, where shall I begin! Oh, cruel Venus!

' How fatal love has been to all our race!

' *Lyc.* Forget it, Madam; let it die in silence.

Phæd. Oh, Ariadne! Oh, unhappy sister!

Lyc. Cease to record your sister's grief and shame.

Phæd. And since the cruel god of love requires it,
I fall the last, and most undone of all.

Lyc. Do you then love?

Phæd. Alas! I groan beneath
The pain, the guilt, the shame of impious love.

Lyc. Forbid it, Heaven!

Phæd.

Phæd. Do not upbraid me, Lycôn.
 I love—Alas, I shudder at the name!
 My blood runs backward, and my fault'ring tongue
 Sticks at the sound—I love—Oh, righteous Heav'n!
 Why was I born with such a sense of virtue,
 So great abhorrence of the smallest crime,
 And yet a slave to such impetuous guilt?
 Rain on me, gods, your plagues, your sharpest tortures;
 Afflict my soul with any thing but guilt;
 And yet that guilt is mine—I'll think no more;
 I'll to the woods among the happier brutes.
 Come, let's away; hark, the shrill horn resounds;
 The jolly huntmen's cries rend the wide heav'ns.
 Come, o'er the hills pursue the bounding stag;
 Come, chase the lion and the foamy boar;
 Come, rouse up all the monsters of the wood;
 For there, ev'n there, Hippolitus will guard me.

Lyc. Hippolitus!

Phæd. Who's he that names Hippolitus?
 Ah, I'm betray'd, and all my guilt discover'd!
 ' Oh, give me poison, swords! I'll not live, nor bear it;
 ' I'll stop my breath.

Ism. I'm lost; but what's that loss?
 ' Hippolitus is lost, or lost to me.
 ' Yet should her charms prevail upon his soul;
 ' Should he be false, I would not wish him ill;
 ' With my last parting breath I'd bless my lord;
 ' Then in some lonely desert place expire,
 ' Whence my unhappy death shall never reach him,
 ' Lest it should wound his peace, or damp his joys. [*Aside.*]

Lyc. Think still the secret in your royal breast;
 For, by the awful majesty of Jove,
 By the all-seeing sun, by righteous Minos,
 By all your kindred gods, we swear, Oh, Phædra!
 Safe as our lives we'll keep the fatal secret.

Ism. *Exit.* We swear, all swear, to keep it ever secret.
 ' *Phæd.* Keep it! from whom? Why it's already known;
 The tale, the whisper of the babbling vulgar.
 Oh, can you keep it from yourselves; unknow it?
 Or do you think I'm so far gone in guilt,
 That I can see, can bear the looks, the eyes
 Of one who knows my black detested crimes;
 Of one who knows that Phædra loves her son?

Lyc.

Lyc. Unhappy queen ! august, unhappy race !
Oh, why did Theseus touch this fatal shore ?
Why did he save us from Nicander's arms,
To bring worse ruin on us by his love ?

Phæd. His love indeed ; for that unhappy hour
In which the priests join'd Theseus' hand to mine,
Shew'd the young Scythian to my dazzled eyes.
Gods ! how I shook ! what boiling heat inflam'd
My panting breast ! how from the touch of Theseus
My slack hand dropp'd, and all the idle pomp,
Priests, altars, victims, swam before my sight !
The god of Love, ev'n the whole god, possess'd me.

Lyc. At once, at first possess'd you !

Phæd. Yes, at first.

That fatal ev'ning we pursu'd the chace,
When from behind the wood, with rustling sound,
A monstrous boar rush'd forth : ' his baleful eyes
' Shot glaring fire, and his stiff-pointed bristles
' Rose high upon his back : ' at me he made,
Whetting his tusks, and churning hideous foam ;
Then, then Hippolitus flew in to aid me :
Collecting all himself, and rising to the blow,
He launch'd the whistling spear ; the well-aim'd jav'lin
Pierc'd his tough hide, and quiver'd in his heart ;
The monster fell, ' and gnashing with huge tusks,
' Plow'd up the crimson earth.' But then Hippolitus !
Gods ! how he mov'd and look'd, when he approach'd
me !

' When hot and panting from the savage conquest,
' Dreadful as Mars, and as his Venus lovely,
' His crimson cheeks with purple beauties glow'd,
' His lovely sparkling eyes shot martial fires.'
Oh, godlike form ! Oh, extacy and transport !
My breath grew short, my beating heart sprung upward,
And leap'd and bounded in my heaving bosom.
Alas, I'm pleas'd ; the horrid story charms me.—
No more—That night with fear and love I sicken'd.
Oft I receiv'd his fatal charming visits ;
Then would he talk with such an heav'nly grace,
Look with such dear compassion on my pains,
That I could wish to be so sick for ever.
My ears, my greedy eyes, my thirsty soul,

Drank gorging in the dear delicious poison,

'Till I was lost, quite lost in impious love.

' And shall I drag an execrable life ?

' And shall I hoard up guilt, and treasure vengeance ?

Lyc. No ; labour, strive, subdue that guilt, and live.

Phæd. Did I not labour, strive, all-seeing pow'rs !

' Did I not weep and pray, implore your aid ?

' Burn clouds of incense on your loaded altars ?

' Oh, I call'd heav'n and earth to my assistance,

' All the ambitious thirst of fame and empire,

' And all the honest pride of conscious virtue :

' I struggled, rav'd ; the new-born passion reign'd

' Almighty in its birth.'

Lyc. Did you e'er try

To gain his love ?

Phæd. Avert such crimes, ye pow'rs !

' No ; to avoid his love I sought his hatred :

' I wrong'd him, shunn'd him, banish'd him from Crete ;

' I sent him, drove him, from my longing sight :

' In vain I drove him, for his tyrant form

' Reign'd in my heart, and dwelt before my eyes.

' If to the gods I pray'd, the very vows

' I made to heav'n were by my erring tongue

' Spoke to Hippolitus. If I try'd to sleep,

' Straight to my drowsy eyes my restless fancy

' Brought back his fatal form, and curs'd my slumber. }

Lyc. First let me try to melt him into love.'

Phæd. No ; did his hapless passion equal mine,

I would refuse the bliss I most desir'd,

Consult my fame, and sacrifice my life.

Yes, I would die, heav'n knows, this very moment,

Rather than wrong my lord, my husband Theseus.

Lyc. Perhaps that lord, that husband is no more ;

He went from Crete in haste, his army thin,

To meet the numerous troops of fierce Molossians ;

Yet though he lives, while ebbing life decays,

Think on your son.

Phæd. Alas, that shocks me.

Oh, let me see my young one, let me snatch

A hasty farewell, a last dying kiss.

Yet stay ; his sight will melt my just resolves :

But, Oh, I beg with my last sallying breath, ~

Cherish my babe.

Enter

Enter Messenger.

Mess. Madam, I grieve to tell you
What you must know : your royal husband's dead.

Phæd. Dead ! Oh, ye pow'rs !

Lyc. Oh, fortunate event !

Then earth-born Lycon may ascend the throne,

Leave to his happy son the crown of Jove,

And be ador'd like him. *Be husb'd my joys.*

[*Aside.*

' Mourn, mourn, ye Cretans ;

' Since he is dead whose valour sav'd your isle,

' Whose prudent care with flowing plenty crown'd

' His peaceful subjects ; as your tow ring Ida.

' With spreading oaks, and with descending streams,

' Shades and enriches all the plains below.'

Say how he dy'd.

Mess. He dy'd as Theseus ought,

In battle dy'd : Philotas, now a prisoner,

That rushing on fought next his royal person,

That saw his thund'ring arm beat squadrons down,

Saw the great rival of Alcides fall.

These eyes beheld his well-known steed, beheld

A proud barbarian glitt'ring in his arms,

Encumber'd with the spoil.

[*Exit.*

Phæd. Is he then dead ?

Is my much-injur'd lord, my Theseus, dead ?

And don't I shed one tear upon his urn ?

What ! not a sigh, a groan, a soft complaint ?

Ah, these are tributes due from pious brides,

From a chaste matron, and a virtuous wife :

But savage love, the tyrant of my heart,

Claims all my sorrows, and usurps my grief.

Lyc. Dismiss that grief, and give a loose to joy :

He's dead, the bar of all your bliss is dead ;

Live then, my queen, forget the wrinkled Theseus,

And take the youthful hero to your arms.

' *Phæd.* I dare not now admit of such a thought,

' And bless'd be heav'n that steel'd my stubborn heart ;

' That made me shun the bridal bed of Theseus,

' And give him empire, but refuse him love.

' *Lyc.* Then may his happier son be blest with both ;

' Then rouse your soul, and muster all your charms,

B. 2

' Soothe

' Soothe his ambitious mind with thirst of empire,
' And all his tender thoughts with soft allurements.'

Phæd. But shou'd the youth refuse my proffer'd love?
Oh, should he throw me from his loathing arms!

I fear the trial; for I know Hippolitus
Fierce in the right, and obstinately good:

' When round beset, his virtue like a flood,
' Breaks with resistless force th' opposing dams,
' And bears the mounds along; they're hurry'd on,
' And swell the torrent they were rais'd to stop.'

I dare not yet resolve; I'll try to live,
And to the awful gods I'll leave the rest.

Lyc. Madam, your signet, that your slave may order
What's most expedient for your royal service.

Phæd. Take it, and with it take the fate of Phædra.
And thou, Oh, Venus! aid a suppliant queen,
That owns thy triumphs, and adores thy pow'r:

' Oh, spare thy captives, and subdue thy foes!
' On this cold Scythian let thy pow'r be known,
' And in a lover's cause assert thy own:
' Then Crete as Paphos shall adore thy shrine;
' This nurse of Jove with grateful fires shall shine,
' And with thy father's flames shall worship thine.'

[*Exeunt Phæd. &c.*]

Lyc. [*Solus.*] If she proposes love, why then as surely
His haughty soul refuses it with scorn.—

Say I confine him!—If she dies he's safe;

And if she lives, I'll work her raging mind.

A woman scorn'd, with ease I'll work to vengeance:

With humble, wise, obsequious fawning arts

I'll rule the whirl and transport of her soul;

That when her reason hates, her rage may act.

When barks glide slowly through the lazy main,

The baffled pilots turn the helms in vain;

When driv'n by winds they cut the foamy way,

The rudders govern, and the ships obey.

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

A C T II.

To Phædra and Lycon, enter Messenger.

MESSENGER.

MADAM, the prince Hippolitus attends.
Pbæd. Admit him. Where, where, Phædra's
 now thy soul!

What—shall I speak? And shall my guilty tongue
 Let this insulting victor know his pow'r?
 Or shall I still confine within my breast
 My restless passions and devouring flames?
 But see, he comes, the lovely tyrant comes.—
 He rushes on me like a blaze of light;
 I cannot bear the transport of his presence,
 But sink oppress'd with woe.

[*Swoons.*]

Enter Hippolitus.

Hip. Immortal gods!

What have I done to raise such strange abhorrence?
 What have I done to shake her shrinking nature
 With my approach, and kill her with my sight?

Lyc. Alas, another grief devours her soul,
 And only your assistance can relieve her.

Hip. Ha! make it known, that I may fly and aid her.

Lyc. But promise first, my lord, to keep it secret.

Hip. Promise! I swear, on this good sword I swear,
 This sword, which first gain'd youthful Theseus honour!
 Which oft has punish'd perjury and falsehood;
 By thund'ring Jove, by Grecian Hercules,
 ' By the majestic form of godlike heroes,
 ' That shine around, and consecrate the steel;
 No racks, no shame, shall ever force it from me.

Pbæd. Hippolitus.

Hip. Yes, 'tis that wretch, who begs you to dismiss
 That hated object from your eyes for ever.
 Begs leave to march against the foes of Theseus,
 And to revenge or share his father's fate.

Pbæd. Oh, Hippolitus!
 I own I've wrong'd you, most unjustly wrong'd you;
 Drove you from court, from Crete, and from your father:
 The court, all Crete, deplor'd their suffering hero,
 And I (the sad occasion) most of all.

Yet could you know relenting Phædra's soul !
 Oh, could you think with what reluctant grief
 I wrong'd the hero whom I wish'd to cherish !
 Oh, you'd confess me wretched, not unkind,
 And own those ills did most deserve your pity,
 Which most procur'd your hate.

Hip. My hate to Phædra !

Ha ! cou'd I hate the royal spouse of Theseus,
 My queen, my mother ?

Phæd. Why your queen and mother ?
 More humble ties would suit my lost condition.

Alas, the iron hand of death is on me,
 And I have only time t'implore your pardon.
 Ah, would my lord forget injurious Phædra,
 And with compassion view her helpless orphan !
 Would he receive him to his dear protection,
 Defend his youth from all encroaching foes !

Hip. Oh, I'll defend him ! with my life defend him !
 Heav'n dart your judgment on this faithless head,
 If I don't pay him all a slave's obedience,
 And all a father's love.

Phæd. A father's love !
 Oh, doubtful sounds ! Oh, vain deceitful hopes !
 My grief's much eas'd by this transcending goodness,
 And Theseus' death fits lighter on my soul.
 Death ! he's not dead ; he lives, he breathes, he speaks ;
 He lives in you, he's present to my eyes ;
 I see him, speak to him.—My heart ! I rave,
 And all my folly's known.

Hip. Oh, glorious folly !
 See, Theseus, see, how much your Phædra lov'd you.

Phæd. Love him ; indeed ! dote, languish, die for him.
 Forake my food, my sleep, all joys for Theseus ;
 ' (But not that hoary venerable Theseus) '
 But Theseus, as he was when mantling blood
 Glow'd in his lovely cheeks ; ' when his bright eyes
 ' Sparkled with youthful fires ; ' when ev'ry grace
 Shone in the father, which now crowns the son :
 When Theseus was Hippolitus.

Hip. Ha ! amazement strikes me :
 Where will this end ?

Lyc. Is't difficult to guess ?

Does not her flying paleness, ' that but now
' Sat cold and languid in her fading cheek,
' (Where now succeeds a momentary lustre)
' Does not her beating heart,' her trembling limbs,
Her wishing looks, her speech, her present silence,
All, all proclaim imperial Phædra loves you ?

Hip. What do I hear ? What, does no lightning flash,
No thunder bellow, when such monstrous crimes
Are own'd, avow'd, confess'd ? All-seeing sun !
Hide, hide in shameful night thy beamy head,
And cease to view the horrors of thy race.
Alas, I share th' amazing guilt ; these eyes,
That first inspir'd the black incestuous flame,
These ears, that heard the tale of impious love,
Are all accurs'd, and all deserve your thunder.

Phæd. Alas, my lord ! believe me not so vile.
No ; ' by thy goddess, by the chaste Diana,
' None but my first, my much-lov'd lord Arsamnes,
' Was e'er receiv'd in these unhappy arms.'
No ; for the love of thee, of those dear charms,
Which now I see are doom'd to be my ruin,
I still deny'd my lord, my husband Theseus,
The chaste, the modest joys of spotless marriage ;
That drove him hence to war, to stormy seas,
To rocks and waves, less cruel than his Phædra.

Hip. If that drove Theseus hence, then that kill'd
Theseus,
And cruel Phædra kill'd her husband Theseus.

Phæd. Forbear, rash youth, nor dare to rouse my ven-
geance ;
Provoke me not ; nor tempt my swelling rage
With black reproaches, scorn, and provocation,
To do a deed my reason would abhor.
Long has the secret struggled in my breast,
Long has it rack'd and rent my tortur'd bosom ;
But now 'tis out. Shame, rage, confusion, tear,
And drive me on to act unheard-of crimes ;
To murder thee, myself, and all that know it.
As when convulsions cleave the lab'ring earth,
Before the dismal yawn appears, the ground
Trembles and heaves, the nodding houses crash ;
He's safe, who from the dreadful warning flies,
But he that sees its opening bosom dies.

[*Exit.*
Hip.

Hip. Then let me take the warning and retire ;
I'd rather trust the rough Ionian waves,
Than woman's fiercer rage.

[Ismena shows herself, listening.]

Lyc. Alas, my lord !
You must not leave the queen to her despair.

Hip. Must not ! from thee ? from that vile upstart
Lycon !

Lyc. Yes ; from that Lycon who derives his greatness
From Phædra's race, and now would guard her life.
Then, Sir, forbear : view here this royal signet,
And in her faithful slave obey the queen.

[Enter Guards and Cratander.]

Guards, watch the prince, but at that awful distance,
With that respect, it may not seem confinement,
But only meant for honour.

Hip. So, confinement is
The honour Crete bestows on Theseus' son,
Am I confin'd ? and is't so soon forgot,
When fierce Procrustes' arms o'er-ran your kingdom ?
When your streets echo'd with the cries of orphans,
Your shrieking maids clung round the hallow'd shrines,
When all your palaces and lofty towers
Smoak'd on the earth, when the red sky around
Glow'd with your city's flames (a dreadful lustre :)
Then, then my father flew to your assistance ;
Then Theseus sav'd your lives, estates, and honours.
And do you thus reward the hero's toil ?
And do you now confine the hero's son ?

Lyc. Take not an easy short confinement ill,
Which your own safety and the queen's requires.
Nor harbour fear of one that joys to serve you.

Hip. Oh, I disdain thee, traitor, but not fear thee ;
Nor will I hear of services from Lycon.
Thy very looks are lies, eternal falsehood
Smiles in thy looks, and flatters in thy eyes :
Ev'n in thy humble face I read my ruin,
In ev'ry cringing bow and fawning smile.
Why else d'y'e whisper out your dark suspicions ?
Why with malignant eulogies encrease
The people's fears, and praise me to my ruin ?
Why through the troubled streets of frighted Gnoſſus

Do bucklers, helms, and polish'd armour blaze ?
Why sounds the dreadful din of instant war,
Whilst still the foe's unknown ?

Lyc. Then quit thy arts ;
Put off the statesman, and resume the judge. [*Aside.*
Thou Proteus, shift thy various forms no more,
But boldly own the god. — That foe's too near.
[*To Hippolitus.*

The queen's disease, and your aspiring mind,
Disturb all Crete, and give a loose to war.

Hip. Gods ! dares he speak thus to a monarch's son,
And must this earth-born slave command in Crete ?
Was it for this my godlike father fought ?
Did Theseus bleed for Lycon ? Oh, ye Cretans,
See there your king, the successor of Minos,
And heir of Jove.

Lyc. You may as well provoke
That Jove you worship, as this slave you scorn.
Go seize Almazon, Nicias, and all
The black abettors of this impious treason.

[*Exit a Soldier.*

Now o'er thy head th' avenging thunder rolls ;
For know on me depends thy instant doom.
Then learn, proud prince, to bend thy haughty soul,
And, if thou think'st of life, obey the queen.

Hip. Then free from fear or guilt I'll wait my doom.
Whate'er's my fault, no stain shall blot my glory.
I'll guard my honour, you dispose my life.

Lyc. Be it so ; Cratander, follow me.

[*Exeunt Lyc. and Crat.*

Hip. Since he dares brave my rage, the danger's near.
The timorous hounds that hunt the generous lion
Bay afar off, and tremble in pursuit ;
But when he struggles in th' entangling toils,
Insult the dying prey.

Enter Ismena and Lail.

'Tis kindly done, Ismena,
' With all your charms to visit my distress ;
' Soften my chains, and make confinement easy.'
Oh, Ismena, is it then giv'n me to behold thy beauties !
' Those blushing sweets, those lovely loving eyes !'
To press, to strain thee to my beating heart,

And

And grow thus to my love ! What's liberty to this ?
 What's fame or greatness ? take 'em, take 'em, Phædra,
 ' Freedom and fame,' and in the dear confinement
 Enclose me thus for ever.

Ism. Oh, Hippolitus !

Oh, I could ever dwell in this confinement !
 Nor wish for aught while I behold my lord :
 But yet that wish, that only wish is vain,
 When my hard fate thus forces me to beg you,
 Drive from your godlike soul a wretched maid :
 Take to your arms (assist me, heav'n, to speak it)
 Take to your arms imperial Phædra,
 And think of me no more.

Hip. Not think of thee ?

What, part ! for ever part ? Unkind Ismena !
 Oh, can you think that death is half so dreadful,
 As it would be to live, and live without thee ?
 Say, should I quit thee, should I turn to Phædra,
 Say, couldst thou bear it ? Could thy tender soul
 Endure the torment of despairing love,
 And see me settled in a rival's arms ?

Ism. Think not of me : perhaps my equal mind
 May learn to bear the fate the gods allot me.
 Yet would you hear me ; ' could your lov'd Ismena
 ' With all her charms o'er-rule your sullen honour,'
 You yet might live, nor leave the poor Ismena.

Hip. Speak : if I can, I'm ready to obey.

Ism. Give the queen hopes.

Hip. No more—my soul disdains it.

No ; should I try, my haughty soul would swell,
 Sharpen each word, and threaten in my eyes.
 Oh, should I stoop to cringe, to lie, forswear ?
 Deserve the ruin which I strive to shun ?

Ism. Oh, I can't bear this cold contempt of death !
 This rigid virtue, that prefers your glory
 To liberty or life. Oh, cruel man !

' By these sad sighs, by these poor streaming eyes,
 ' By that dear love that makes us now unhappy,
 ' By the near danger of that precious life,
 ' Heav'n knows I value much above my own.
 ' What ! not yet mov'd ?' Are you resolv'd on death ?

Then,

Then, ere 'tis night, I swear by all the pow'rs,
This steel shall end my fears and life together.

Hip. You shan't be trusted with a life so precious.

' No; to the court I'll publish your design :

' Ev'n bloody Lycon will prevent your fate ;

' Lycon shall wrench the dagger from your bosom,

' And raving Phædra will preserve Ismena.

Ism. Phædra ! come on, I'll lead you on to Phædra :

' I'll tell her all the secrets of our love ;

' Give to her rage her close destructive rival :

' Her rival sure will fall ; her love may save you.

' Come, see me labour in the pangs of death,

' My agonizing limbs, my dying eyes,

' Dying, yet fix'd in death on my Hippolitus.'

Hip. ' What's your design ?' Ye pow'rs ! what means
my love ?

Ism. She means to lead you in the road of fate ;

She means to die with one she can't preserve.

Yet when you see me pale upon the earth,

This once-lov'd form grown horrible in death,

Sure your relenting soul would wish you'd sav'd me.

Hip. Oh, I'll do all, do any thing to save you ;

Give up my fame, and all my darling honour :

' I'll run, I'll fly ; what you'll command I'll say.'

I yield, Ismena. What would you have me do ?

Ism. Say what occasion, chance, or Heav'n inspires ;

Say that you love her, that you lov'd her long ;

Say that you'll wed her, say that you'll comply ;

Say, to preserve your life, say any thing.

Bless him, ye pow'rs ! and if it be a crime——[*Exit Hip.*

Oh, if the pious fraud offend your justice,

Aim all your vengeance on Ismena's head ;

Punish Ismena, but forgive Hippolitus.

' He's gone, and now my brave resolves are stagger'd ;

' Now I repent, like some despairing wretch

' That boldly plunges in the frightful deep,

' That pants, and struggles with the whirling waves,

' And catches ev'ry slender reed to save him.'

Lady. But should he do what your commands en-
join'd him,

Say, should he wed her ?

Ism. Should he wed the queen ?

Oh,

Oh, I'd remember that 'twas my request,
And die well pleas'd I made the hero happy.

Lady. Die! does Ismena then resolve to die?

Ism. Can I then live? can I, who lov'd so well,
To part with all my blifs to save my lover?
Oh, can I drag a wretched life without him,
And see another revel in his arms?
Oh, 'tis in death alone I can have comfort!

Enter Lycon.

Lyc. What a reverse is this? Perfidious boy,
Is this thy truth? is this thy boasted honour?
Then all are rogues alike: I never thought
But one man honest, and that one deceives me. [*Aside.*
Ismena here? —

Ismena. Now, my Lord, is the queen's rage abated?
How is the prince dispos'd?

Lyc. Happily.
All's chang'd to love and harmony, my fair.
'Tis all agreed, and now the prince is safe
From the sure vengeance of despairing love;
Now Phædra's rage is chang'd to soft endearments:
She doats, she dies; and few, but tedious days,
With endless joys will crown the happy pair.

Ism. Does he then wed the queen?

Lyc. At least I think so.

I, when the prince approach'd, not far retir'd,
Pale with my doubts: he spoke; th' attentive queen
Dwelt on his accents, and her gloomy eyes
Sparkled with gentler fires; he blushing bow'd;
She, trembling, lost in love, with soft confusion
Receiv'd his passion, and return'd her own.
Then smiling turn'd to me, and bade me order
The pompous rites of her ensuing nuptials,
Which I must now pursue. Farewel, Ismena. [*Exit.*

Ism. Then I'll retire, and not disturb their joys.

Lady. Stay and learn more.

Ism. Ah! wherefore should I stay?
What! shall I stay to rave, t'upbraid, to hold him?
To snatch the struggling charmer from her arms?
For could you think that open gen'rous youth
Could with feign'd love deceive a jealous woman?
' Could he so soon grow artful in dissembling?

Ah,

' Ah, without doubt his thoughts inspir'd his tongue,
' And all his soul receiv'd a real love.
' Perhaps new graces darted from her eyes,
' Perhaps soft pity charm'd his yielding soul,
' Perhaps her love, perhaps her kingdom, charm'd him;
' Perhaps—alas, how many things might charm him!
' *Lady.* Wait the success: it is not yet decided.

' *Ism.* Not yet decided! did not Lycon tell us
' How he protested, sigh'd, and look'd, and vow'd?
' How the soft passion languish'd in his eyes?
Ay, no, he loves, he dotes on Phædra's charms.
Now, now he clasps her to his panting breast,
' Now he devours her with his eager eyes,'
Now grasps her hands, and now he looks, and vows
The dear false things that charm'd the poor Ismena.
He comes; be still, my heart; the tyrant comes,
Charming though false, and lovely in his guilt.

Enter Hippolitus.

Hip. Why hangs that cloudy sorrow on your brow?
Why do you sigh? Why flow your swelling eyes?
These eyes that us'd with joy to view Hippolitus.

Ism. My lord, my soul is charm'd with your success.
You know, my lord, my fears are but for you,
For your dear life; and since my death alone
Can make you safe, that soon shall make me happy.
' Yet had you brought less love to Phædra's arms,
' My soul had parted with a less regret,
' Blest if surviving in your dear remembrance.'

Hip. Your death! ' my love! my marriage! and to
Phædra!'

Hear me, Ismena.

Ism. No, I dare not hear you.
But though you've been thus cruelly unkind,
Though you have left me for the royal Phædra,
Yet still my soul o'er-runs with fondness tow'rd's you;
Yet still I die with joy to save Hippolitus.

Hip. Die to save me! could I outlive Ismena?

Ism. Yes, you'd outlive her in your Phædra's arms,
And may you there find ev'ry blooming pleasure!
Oh, may the gods show'r blessings on thy head!
' May the gods crown thy glorious arms with conquest,
' And all thy peaceful days with sure repose!'

May'st thou be blest with lovely Phædra's charms,
And for thy ease forget the lost Ismena!

'Farewel, Hippolitus.'

Hip. Ismena, stay,

Stay, hear me speak; or by th' infernal powers
I'll not survive the minute you depart.

Ism. What would you say? ah! don't deceive my
weakness.

Hip. Deceive thee! why, Ismena, do you wrong me?
Why doubt my faith? Oh, lovely, cruel maid!
Why wound my tender soul with harsh suspicion?
Oh, by those charming eyes, by thy dear love,
I neither thought nor spoke, design'd nor promis'd,
To love, or wed the queen.

Ism. Speak on, my lord,
My honest soul inclines me to believe thee;
And much I fear, and much I hope I've wrong'd thee.

Hip. Then thus. I came and spake, but scarce of love;
The easy queen receiv'd my faint address
With eager hope and unsuspicious faith.
Lyon, with seeming joy, dismiss'd my guards:
My gen'rous soul disdain'd the mean deceit,
But still deceiv'd her to obey Ismena.

Ism. Art thou then true? Thou art. Oh, pardon me?
Pardon the errors of a silly maid,
Wild with her fears, and mad with jealousy;
For still that fear, that jealousy was love.
Haste then, my lord, and save yourself by flight;
'And when your absent, when your godlike form
'Shall cease to cheer forlorn Ismena's eyes,
'Then let each day, each hour, each minute, bring
'Some kind remembrance of your constant love;
'Speak of your health, your fortune, and your friends,
'(For sure those friends shall have my tender'st wishes)
'Speak much of all; but of thy dear, dear love,
'Speak much, speak very much, but still speak on.'

Hip. Oh, thy dear love shall ever be my theme;
Of that alone I'll talk the live-long day;
But thus I'll talk, thus dwelling in thy eyes,
Tasting the odours of thy fragrant bosom.
Come then, to crown me with immortal joys,
Come, be the kind companion of my flight;

Come,

Come, haste with me to leave this fatal shore.
The bark before prepar'd for my departure
Expects its freight; an hundred lusty rowers
Have wav'd their sinewy arms, and call Hippolitus;
The loosen'd canvas trembles with the wind,
And the sea whitens with auspicious gales.

Ism. Fly, then, my lord; and may the gods protect
Fly, ere insidious Lycon work thy ruin; [thee;
Fly, ere my fondness take thy life away;
Fly from the queen.

Hip. But not from my Ismena.
Why do you force me from your heav'nly-sight,
With those dear arms that ought to clasp me to thee?

Ism. Oh, I could rave for ever at my fate!
And with alternate love and fear possess'd, [breast,
Now force thee from my arms, now snatch thee to my
And tremble till you go, but die till you return.
Nay, I could go. Ye gods, if I should go,
What would fame say; if I should fly alone
With a young, lovely prince, that charm'd my soul?

Hip. Say you did well to fly a certain ruin,
To fly the fury of a queen incens'd;
To crown with endless joys the youth that lov'd you.
Oh, by the joys our mutual loves have brought,
By the bless'd hours I've languish'd at your feet,
By all the love you ever bore Hippolitus,
Come, fly from hence, and make him ever happy.

Ism. Hide me, ye pow'rs! I never shall resist.
Hip. Will you refuse me? Can I leave behind me
All that inspires my soul, and cheers my eyes?
Will you not go? Then here I'll wait my doom.
Come, raving Phædra, bloody Lycon, come;
I offer to your rage this worthless life,
Since 'tis no longer my Ismena's care.

Ism. Oh, haste away, my lord! I go, I fly
Thro' all the dangers of the boist'rous deep.
When the wind whistles thro' the crackling masts,
When thro' the yawning ship the foaming sea
Rowls bubbling in; then, then, I'll clasp thee fast,
And in transporting love forget my fear.
Oh, I will wander thro' the Scythian gloom,
O'er ice and hills of everlasting snow!

There, when the horrid darkness shall inclose us,
When the bleak wind shall chill my shiv'ring limbs,
Thou shalt alone supply the distant sun,
And cheer my gazing eyes, and warm my heart.

Hip. Come, let's away; and, like another Jason,
I'll bear my beauteous conquest thro' the seas:

A greater treasure, and a nobler prize,
Than he from Colchos bore. Sleep, sleep in peace
Ye monsters of the woods, on Ida's top
Securely roam; no more my early horn
Shall wake the lazy day. Transporting love
Reigns in my heart, and makes me all its own.
So, when bright Venus yielded up her charms,
The blest Adonis languish'd in her arms;
His idle horn on fragrant myrtles hung,
His arrows scatter'd, and his bow unstrung:
Obscure in covert lie his dreaming hounds,
And bay the fancy'd boar with feeble sounds;
For nobler sports he quits the savage fields,
And all the hero to the lover yields.

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

Enter Lycon and Guards.

LYCON.

HEAV'N is at last appeas'd: the pitying gods
Have heard our wishes, and auspicious Jove
Smiles on his native isle; for Phædra lives,
Restor'd to Crete, and to herself, she lives:
Joy with fresh strength inspires her drooping limbs,
' Revives her charms,' and o'er her faded cheeks
Spreads ' a fresh' rosy bloom: ' as kindly springs
' With genial heat renew the frozen earth,
' And paints its smiling face with gaudy flow'rs.
' But see, she comes, the beauteous Phædra comes.

Enter Phædra and four Ladies.

' How her eyes sparkle! how their radiant beams
' Confess their shining ancestor the sun!

Your

Your charms to-day will wound despairing crowds,
And give the pains you suffer'd : nay, Hippolitus,
The fierce, the brave, th' insensible Hippolitus,
Shall pay a willing homage to your beauty,
And in his turn adore.

Phæd. 'Tis flatt'ry all.

Yet, when you name the prince, that flatt'ry's pleasing.
You wish it so, poor good old man, you wish it.
The fertile province of Cydonia's thine.

Is there aught else ? Has happy Phædra aught
In the wide circle of her far-stretch'd empire ?
Ask, take, my friend, secure of no repulse.

Let spacious Crete, thro' all her hundred cities,
Resound her Phædra's joy. • Let altars smoke,

' And richest gums, and spice, and incense roll
' Their fragrant wreaths to Heav'n, to pitying Heav'n,
' Which gives Hippolitus to Phædra's arms.

' Set all at large, and bid the loathsome dungeons

' Give up the meagre slaves that pine in darkness,

' And waste in grief, as did despairing Phædra :

' Let them be cheer'd, let the starv'd prisoners riot,

' And glow with gen'rous wine.' Let sorrow cease :

Let none be wretched, none, since Phædra's happy.

' But now he comes, and with an equal passion

' Rewards my flame, and springs into my arms !'

Enter Messenger.

Say, where's the prince ?

Mess. He's no where to be found.

Phæd. Perhaps he hunts.

Mess. He hunted not to-day.

Phæd. Ha ! have you search'd the walks, the courts,

Mess. Search'd all in vain. [the temples ?

Phæd. Did he not hunt to-day ?

Alas, you told me once before he did not ! [Exit Mess.

My heart misgives me.

Lyc. ' So, indeed, doth mine.'

Then my fears were true.

Phæd. Could he deceive me ? Could that godlike youth
Design the ruin of a queen that loves ?

Oh, he's all truth ! his words, his looks, his eyes,

Open to view his inmost thoughts—He comes— [Hippolitus ?

Ha ! who art thou ? Whence com'st thou ? Where's Hip-

Enter Messenger.

Mess. Madam, Hippolitus, with fair Ismena,
Drove tow'rd the port.

Phæd. With fair Ismena!

Curs'd be her cruel beauty, curs'd her charms,
Curs'd all her soothing, fatal, false endearments.

• That heav'nly virgin; that exalted goodness,
• Could see me tortur'd with despairing love;
• With artful tears could mourn my monstrous sufferings,
• While her base malice plotted my destruction.'

Lyc. A thousand reasons crowd upon my soul,
That evidence their love.

• *Phæd.* Yes, yes, they love;

• Why else should he refuse my proffer'd bed?
• Why should one warm'd with youth, and thirst of glory,
• Disdain a soul, a form, a crown like mine?

• *Lyc.* Where, Lycón, where was then thy boasted
Dull, thoughtless wretch! [cunning?

Phæd. Oh, pains unfelt before!

The grief, despair, the agonies, and pangs,
All the wild fury of distracted love,
Are nought to this——Say, famous politician,
Where, when, and how did their first passion rise?
Where did they breathe their sighs? What shady groves,
What gloomy woods, conceal'd their hidden loves?
Alas, they hid it not! the well-pleas'd sun,
With all his beams survey'd their guiltless flame;
Glad zephyrs wafted their untainted sighs,
And Ida echo'd their endearing accents.

While I, the shame of nature, hid in darkness,
Far from the balmy air, and cheering light,
Press'd down my sighs, and dry'd my falling tears,
Search'd a retreat to mourn, and watch'd to grieve.

• *Lyc.* Now cease that grief, and let your injur'd love
Contrive due vengeance; let majestic Phædra,
That lov'd the hero, sacrifice the villain.

Then haste, send forth your ministers of vengeance,
To snatch the traitor from your rival's arms,
And force him, trembling, to your awful presence.

Phæd. Oh, rightly thought!—Dispatch th' attending
Bid them bring forth their instruments of death; [guards;

Darius.

Darts, engines, flames, and launch into the deep,
And hurl swift vengeance on the perjur'd slave.

[*Exit Messenger.*]

Where am I, gods? What is't my rage commands?
Ev'n now he's gone; ev'n now the well-tim'd oars
With sounding strokes divide the sparkling waves,
And happy gales assist their speedy flight.

' Now they embrace, and ardent love enflames
' Their flushing cheeks, and trembles in their eyes.
' Now they expose my weakness and my crimes;
' Now to the sporting croud they tell my follies.'

Enter Cratander.

Crat. Sir, as I went to seize the persons order'd:
I met the prince, and with him fair Ismena;
I seiz'd the prince, who now attends without.

Phæd. Haste, bring him in.

Lyc. Be quick, and seize Ismena. [*Exit Cratander.*]

Enter Hippolitus, with two Guards.

Phæd. Couldst thou deceive me? Could a son of Theseus
Stoop to so mean, so base a vice as fraud; [*Theseus*]
Nay, act such monstrous perfidy, yet start
From promis'd love?

Hip. My soul disdain'd a promise.

Phæd. But yet your false equivocating tongue,
Your looks, your eyes, your ev'ry motion promis'd.
But you are ripe in frauds, and learn'd in falsehoods,
' Look down, Oh, Theseus! and behold thy son,
' As Scion faithless, as Procrustes cruel.
' Behold the crimes, the tyrants, all the monsters,
' From which thy valour purg'd the groaning earth,
' Behold them all in thy own son reviv'd.

' *Hip.* Touch not my glory, lest you stain your own.
' I still have strove to make my glorious father
' Blush, yet rejoice to see himself outdone;
' To mix my parents in my lineal virtues,
' As Theseus just, and as Camilla chaste.

' *Phæd.* The godlike Theseus never was thy parent.
' No, 'twas some monthly Cappadocian drudge,
' Obedient to the scourge, and beaten to her arms,
' Begot thee, traitor, on the chaste Camilla.
' Camilla chaste! an Amazon, and chaste!
' That quits her sex, and yet retains her virtue.

* See

' See the chaste matron mount the neighing steed ;
 ' In strict embraces lock the struggling warrior,
 ' And choose the lover in the sturdy foe.
 ' *Enter Messenger, and seems to talk earnestly with Lycon.*
 ' *Hip.* No, she refus'd the vows of godlike Theseus,
 ' And chose to stand his arms, not meet his love ;
 ' And doubtful was the fight. The wide Thermoodon
 ' Heard the huge strokes resound ; its frightened waves
 ' Convey'd the rattling din to distant shores,
 ' While she alone supported all his war ;
 ' Nor till she sunk beneath his thund'ring arm,
 ' Beneath which warlike nations bow'd, would yield
 ' To honest, wish'd-for love.

' *Phæd.* Not so her son,
 ' Who boldly ventures on forbidden flames,
 ' On one descended from the cruel Pallas,
 ' Foe to thy father's person and his blood ;
 ' Hated by him, of kindred yet more hated,
 ' The last of all the wicked race he ruin'd.
 ' In vain a fierce successive hatred reign'd
 ' Between your fires ; in vain, like Cadmus' race,
 ' With mingled blood they dy'd the blushing earth.

' *Hip.* In vain, indeed, since now the war is o'er :
 ' We, like the Theban race, agree to love ;
 ' And by our mutual flames and future offspring,
 ' Atone for slaughter past.

' *Phæd.* Your future offspring !
 ' Heav'ns ! what a medley's this ? What dark confusion
 ' Of blood and death, of murder and relation !
 ' What joy't had been to old disabled Theseus,
 ' When he should take the offspring in his arms,
 ' Ev'n in his arms to hold an infant Palas,
 ' And be upbraided with his grandfere's fate ?
 Oh, barbarous youth !

Lyc. Too barbarous, I fear. *[Distant shout.]*
 Perhaps e'en now his faction's up in arms,
 Since waving crowds roll onward towards the palace,
 And rend the city with tumultuous clamours.
 Perhaps to murder Phædra and her son,
 And give the crown to him and his Ismena.
 But I'll prevent it.

[Exit.]
 Ismena

Ismena brought in by two Gentlemen.

Phæd. What, the kind Ismena,
That nurs'd me, watch'd my sickness! Oh, she watch'd me,
As rav'nous vultures watch the dying lion,
To tear his heart, and riot in his blood!
' Hark, hark, my little infant cries for justice!
' Oh, be pleas'd, my babe, thou shalt have justice!
Now all the spirits of my godlike race
Enflame my soul, and urge me on to vengeance.
' Arsamæa, Minos, Jove, th' avenging Sun,
' Inspire my fury, and demand my justice.
' Oh, you shall have it! thou, Minos, shalt applaud it.
' Yes, thou shalt copy it in their pains below.
God of revenge, arise!—He comes! he comes!
' And shoots himself thro' all my kindling blood.'
I have it here—Now base, perfidious wretch,
Now sigh, and weep, and tremble in thy turn.
Yes, your Ismena shall appease my vengeance.
Ismena dies; and thou, her pitying lover,
Doom'd her to death—Thou too shalt see her bleed,
See her convulsive pangs, and hear her dying groans.
Go, glut thy eyes with thy ador'd Ismena,
And laugh at dying Phædra.

Hip. Oh, Ismena!

Ism. Alas, my tender soul should shrink at death,
Shake with its fears, and sink beneath its pains,
In any cause but this!—But now I'm steel'd,
And the near danger lessens to my fight.
Now, if I live, 'tis only for Hippolitus;
And with unequal joy I'll die to save him.
' Yes, for his sake I'll go a willing shade;
' And wait his coming in th' Elysian fields;
' And there enquire of each descending ghost
' Of my lov'd hero's welfare, life, and honour:
' That dear remembrance will improve the bliss, [py.
' Add to th' Elysian joys, and make that heav'n more hap-
Hip. ' Oh, heav'nly virgin! [*Aside.*] ' Oh, imperial
Let your rage fall on this devoted head; [Phædra
But spare, Oh, spare a guiltless virgin's life!
' Think of her youth, her innocence, her virtue;
' Think with what warm compassion she bemoan'd you;
' Think how she serv'd and watch'd you in your sickness;
' How

' How ev'ry rising and descending sun
 ' Saw kind Ismena watching o'er the queen.'
 ' I only promis'd, I alone deceiv'd you ;
 And I, and only I, should feel your justice.

Ism. Oh, by those pow'rs to whom I soon must answer
 For all my faults ; by that bright arch of heav'n
 I now last see, I wrought him by my wiles,
 By tears, by threats, by ev'ry female art,
 Wrought his disdainful soul to false compliance.
 The son of Theseus could not think of fraud ;
 'Twas woman all.

Phæd. I see 'twas woman all :
 And woman's fraud should meet with woman's vengeance.
 But yet thy courage, truth, and virtue shock me :
 A love so warm, so firm, so like my own.
 Oh, had the gods so pleas'd ! had bounteous heav'n
 Bestow'd Hippolitus on Phædra's arms,
 So had I stood the shock of angry fate ;
 So had I giv'n my life with joy to save him.

Hip. And can you doom her death ? Can Minos' daugh-
 Condemn the virtue which her soul admires ? [ter
 Are not you Phædra, once the boast of fame,
 Shame of our sex, and pattern of your own ?

Phæd. Am I that Phædra ? No ; another soul
 Informs my alter'd frame. Could else Ismena
 Provoke my hatred, yet deserve my love ?
 Aid me, ye gods, support my sinking glory,
 Restore my reason, and confirm my virtue.
 Yet, is my rage unjust ? Then, why was Phædra
 Rescu'd for torment, and preserv'd for pain ?
 Why did you raise me to the height of joy,
 Above the wreck of clouds and storms below,
 To dash and break me on the ground for ever ;

Ism. Was it not time to urge him to compliance,
 At least to feign it, when perfidious Lycon
 Confin'd his person, and conspir'd his death ?

Phæd. Confin'd and doom'd to death ! Oh, cruel Lycon !
 Could I have doom'd thy death ? Could these sad eyes,
 That lov'd thee living, e'er behold thee dead ?
 Yet thou couldst see me die without concern,
 Rather than save a wretched queen from ruin.

' Else could you choose to trust the warring winds, ' The

• The swelling waves, the rocks, the faithless sands,
 • And all the raging monsters of the deep ?
 Oh, think you see me on the naked shore !
 Think how I scream and tear my scatter'd hair ;
 Break from th' embraces of my shrieking maids,
 And harrow on the sand my bleeding bosom ;
 Then catch with wide-stretch'd arms the empty billows,
 And headlong plunge into the gaping deep.

Hip. Oh, dismal state ! my bleeding heart relents,
 And all my thoughts dissolve in tenderest pity.

Phæd. If you can pity, Oh, refuse not love !
 But stoop to rule in Crete, the seat of heroes,
 And nursery of gods. . . A hundred cities
 Court thee for lord, ' where the rich busy crouds
 ' Struggle for passage thro' the spacious streets ;
 ' Where thousand ships o'ershade the less'ning main,
 ' And tire the lab'ring wind. The suppliant nations
 ' Bow to its ensigns, and, with lower'd sails,
 ' Confess the ocean's queen. For thee alone
 ' The winds shall blow, and the vast ocean roll.
 ' For thee alone the fam'd Cydonian warriors
 ' From twangling yews shall send their fatal shafts.

• *Hip.* Then let me march their leader, not their prince ;
 • And at the head of your renown'd Cydonians
 • Brandish this far-fam'd sword of conqu'ring Theseus ;
 • That I may shake th' Egyptian tyrant's yoke
 • From Asia's neck, and fix it on his own ;
 • That willing nations may obey your laws,
 • And your bright ancestor, the Sun, may shine
 • On nought but Phædra's empire.

• *Phæd.* Why not thine ?
 • Dost thou so far detest my proffer'd bed,
 • As to refuse my crown ? Oh, cruel youth !
 • By all the pain that wrings my tortur'd soul,
 • By all the dear deceitful hopes you gave me,
 • Oh, ease, at least, once more delude, my sorrows !
 • For your dear sake I've lost my darling honour ;
 • For you but now I gave my soul to death ;
 • For you I'd quit my crown, and stoop beneath
 • The happy bondage of an humble wife ;
 • With thee I'd climb the steepy Ida's summit,
 • And in the scorching heat and chilling dews,

• O'er

‘ O’er hills, o’er vales pursue the slaggish lion.
 ‘ Careless of danger, and of wasting toil,
 ‘ Of pinching hunger, and impatient thirst,
 ‘ I’ll find all joys in thee.

‘ *Hip.* Why stoops the queen
 ‘ To ask, intreat, to supplicate, and pray
 ‘ To prostitute her crown and sex’s honour
 ‘ To one whose humble thoughts can only rise
 ‘ To be your slave, nor lord ?’

Phæd. ‘ And is that all ?’

See if he deign to force an artful groan,
 Or call a tear from his unwilling eyes ?

‘ Hard as his native rocks, cold as his sword,
 ‘ Fierce as the wolves that howl’d around his birth ;
 ‘ He hates the tyrant, and the suppliant scorns.
 ‘ Oh, heav’n ! Oh, Minos ! Oh, Imperial Jove !
 ‘ Do ye not blush at my degenerate weakness ?’

Hence, lazy, mean, ignoble passions, fly !

Hence from my soul ——— ‘Tis gone, ‘tis fled for ever,
 And Heav’n inspires my thoughts with righteous ven-
 Thou shalt no more despise my offer’d love ; [geance.
 No more Ismena shall upbraid my weakness.

[*Catches Hip. sword to stab herself.*

Now, all ye kindred gods, look down and see
 How I’ll revenge you, and myself, on Phædra.

Enter Lycon, and snatches away the sword.

Lyc. Horror on horror ! Theseus is return’d.

Phæd. Theseus ! then what have I to do with life ?
 May I be snatch’d with winds, by earth o’erwhelm’d,
 Rather than view the face of injur’d Theseus.
 Now wider still my growing horrors spread,
 My fame, my virtue, nay, my frenzy’s fled :
 Then view my wretched race, Imperial Jove,
 If crimes enrage you, or misfortunes move ;
 On me your flames, on me your bolts employ,
 Me, if your anger spares, your pity should destroy.

[*Runs off.*

Lyc. This may do service yet.

[*Exit Lycon, carries off the sword.*

Hip. Is he return’d ? Thanks to the pitying gods !
 Shall I again behold his awful eyes ?
 Again be folded in his loving arms ?

Yet,

Yet, in the midst of joy, I fear for Phædra ;
I fear his warmth, and unrelenting justice.

Oh ! should her raging passion reach his ears,
His tender love, by anger fir'd, would turn [oil,
To burning rage ; *[Trumpets sound.]* ' as soft Cydonian
' Whose balmy juice glides o'er th' untasting tongue,
' Yet touch'd with fire, with hottest flames will blaze.

But, Oh, ye pow'rs ! I see his godlike form.

Oh, extacy of joy ! he comes ! he comes !

Enter Theseus, Officer, and Guards.

Is it my lord, my father ? Oh, 'tis he !

' I see him, touch him, ' feel his own embraces ;

See all the father in his joyful eyes,

Where have you been, my lord ? What angry demon

Hid you from Crete, from me ? What god has sav'd you ?

Did not Philotas see you fall ? Oh, answer me !

And then I'll ask a thousand questions more.

Thes. No ; but to save my life I feign'd my death ;

My horse and well-known arms confirm'd the tale,

And hinder'd farther search. This honest Greek

Conceal'd me in his house, and cur'd my wounds ;

Procur'd a vessel, and, to bless me more,

Accompanied my flight——

But this at leisure. Let me now indulge

A father's fondness ; let me snatch thee thus,

Thus fold thee in my arms. Such, such was I,

[Embraces Hippolitus.]

When first I saw thy mother, chaste Camilla ;

And much she lov'd me. Oh, did Phædra view me

With half that fondness !——But she's still unkind,

Else hasty joy had brought her to these arms,

To welcome me to liberty, to life,

And make that life a blessing. Come, my son,

Let us to Phædra.

Hip. Pardon me, my lord.

Thes. Forget her former treatment ; she's too good

Still to persist in hatred to my son.

Hip. Oh, let me fly from Crete, from you, *[Aside.]*
and Phædra !

Thes. My son, what means this turn, this sudden start ?

Why would you fly from Crete, and from your father ?

Hip. Not from my father, but from lazy Crete ;

To follow danger, and acquire renown ;
 To quell the monsters that escap'd your sword,
 And make the world confess me Theseus' son.

Ibes. What can this coldness mean ?—Retire, my son,
 [Exit Hippolitus.]

While I attend the queen——What shock is this ?
 Why tremble thus my limbs ? Why faints my heart ?
 Why am I thrill'd with fear, till now unknown ?
 Where's now the joy, the extasy and transport,
 That warm'd my soul, and urg'd me on to Phædra ?
 Oh, had I never lov'd her, I'd been bless'd !
 Sorrow and joy in love alternate reign ;
 Sweet is the bliss, distracting is the pain.

' So when the Nile its fruitful deluge spreads,
 ' And genial heat informs its slimy beds ;
 ' Here yellow harvests crown the fertile plain,
 ' There monstrous serpents fright the lab'ring swain ;
 ' A various product fills the fatten'd sand,
 ' And the same floods enrich and curse the land.

[Exit.]

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

Enter Lycon.

THIS may gain time, till all my wealth's embark'd,
 To ward my foes revenge, and finish mine,
 To shake that empire which I can't possess.
 But then the queen—she dies—why let her die ;
 Let wild destruction seize on all together,
 So Lycon live——A safe, triumphant exile,
 Great in disgrace, and envied in his fall.
 The queen ! then try thy art, and work her passions ;

Enter Phædra and Ladies.

Draw her to act what most her soul abhors ;
 Possess her whole, and speak thyself in Phædra.

Phæd. Off, let me loose ; why, cruel, barb'rous maids,
 Why am I barr'd from death, the common refuge,
 That spreads its hospitable arms for all ?
 ' Why must I drag the insufferable load
 ' Of soul dishonour, and despairing love !'

Oh,

Oh, length of pain ! ‘ Am I so often dying,
‘ And yet not dead ?’ Feel I so oft death’s pangs,
Nor once can find its ease ?

Lyc. Would you now die ;
Now quit the field to your insulting foe ?
Then shall he triumph o’er your blasted name :
Ages to come, the universe shall learn
The wide, immortal infamy of Phædra :
And the poor babe, the idol of your soul,
The lovely image of your dear dead lord,
Shall be upbraided with his mother’s crimes ;
Shall bear your shame, shall sink beneath your faults,
Inherit your disgrace, but not your crown.

Pbed. Must he too fall, involv’d in my destruction,
And only live to curse the name of Phædra ?
Oh, dear, unhappy babe ! ‘ must I bequeath thee
‘ Only a sad inheritance of woe ?’
Gods, cruel gods ! can’t all my pains atone,
Unless they reach my infant’s guiltless head ?
Oh, lost estate ! ‘ when life’s so sharp a torment,
‘ And death itself can’t ease.’—Assist me, Lycôn ;
Advise, speak comfort to my troubled soul.

Lyc. ‘Tis you must drive that trouble from your soul ;
‘ As streams when damm’d forget their antient current,
‘ And wand’ring o’er their banks, in other channels flow ;’
‘Tis you must bend your thoughts from hopeless love,
And turn their course to Theseus’ happy bosom,
‘ And crown his eager hopes with wish’d enjoyment :’
Then with fresh charms adorn your troubled looks,
Display the beauties first inspir’d his soul,
Sooth with your voice, and woo him with your eyes.

Pbed. Impossible ! ‘ What, woo him with these eyes,
‘ Still wet with tears that flow’d—but not for Theseus ?’
‘ This tongue, so us’d to sound another name ?’
‘ What, take him to my arms ? Oh, awful Juno !’
‘ Touch, love, caress him, while my wand’ring fancy
‘ On other objects strays ? A lewd adulteress
‘ In the chaste bed ; and in the father’s arms,
‘ (Oh, horrid thought ! Oh, execrable incest !)
‘ Ev’n in the father’s arms embrace the son ?’

Lyc. Yet you must see him, ‘ lest impatient love
‘ Should urge his temper to too nice a search,
‘ And ill-tim’d absence should disclose your crime.

' *Phæd.* Could I, when-present to his awful eyes,
 ' Conceal the wild disorders of my soul?
 ' Would not my groans, my looks, my speech betray me?
 ' Betray thee, Phædra! then thou'rt not betray'd.
 ' Live, live secure, adoring Cete conceals thee;
 ' Thy pious love, and most endearing goodness
 ' Will charm the kind Hippolitus to silence.
 ' Oh, wretched Phædra! Oh, ill-guarded secret!
 ' To foes alone disclos'd!

' *Lyc.* I needs must fear them,
 ' Spite of their vows, their oaths, their imprecations.

' ' *Phæd.* Do imprecations, oaths, or vows avail?
 ' I too have sworn, ev'n at the altar sworn,
 ' Eternal love and endless faith to Theseus;
 ' And yet am false, forsworn: the hallow'd shrine
 ' That heard me swear, is witness to my falshood.
 ' The youth, the very author of my crimes,
 ' Ev'n he shall tell that fault himself inspir'd;
 ' The fatal eloquence that charm'd my soul
 ' Shall lavish all its arts to my destruction.'

Lyc. Hippolitus, Oh, he will tell it all——Destruction
 seize him.

With seeming grief, and aggravating pity,
 And more to blacken, will excuse your folly;
 False tears shall wet his unrelenting eyes.
 And his glad heart with artful sighs shall heave;
 Then Theseus——How will indignation swell
 His mighty heart? How his majestic frame
 Will shake with rage too fierce, too swift for vent?

While the proud Scythian——

' How he'll expose you to the public scorn,
 ' And loathing crowds shall murmur out their horror?
 ' Then the fierce Scythian—now methinks I see
 ' His fiery eyes with sullen pleasures glow,
 ' Survey your tortures, and insult your pangs;
 ' I see him, smiling on the pleas'd Ismena,
 ' Point out with scorn the once-proud tyrant Phædra.'

Phæd. Curs'd be his name! may infamy attend him!
 May swift destruction fall upon his head,
 Hurl'd by the hand of those he most adores.

Lyc. By Heav'n, prophetic truth inspires your tongue:
 ' He shall endure the shame he means to give;'

For all the torments which he heaps on you,
With just revenge, shall Theseus turn on him.

Phad. Is't possible? Oh, Lycon! Oh, my refuge!
Oh, good old man! thou oracle of wisdom!
Declare the means, that Phædra may adore thee.

Lyc. Accuse him first.

Phad. Oh, heav'n's! accuse the guiltless?

Lyc. Then be accus'd; let Theseus know your crimes;
Let lasting infamy o'erwhelm your glory;
Let your foe triumph, and your infant fall —

- Shake off this idle lethargy of pity;
- With ready war prevent th' invading foe,
- Preserve your glory, and secure your vengeance,
- Be yours the fruit, security, and ease,
- The guilt, the danger, and the labour mine.

Phad. Heav'n's! Theseus comes.

Lyc. Declare your last resolves,

Phad. Do you resolve, for Phædra can do nothing.

[*Exit Phædra.*

Lyc. Now, Lycon, heighten his impatient love,
Now raise his pity, now enflame his rage,
Quicken his hopes, then quash 'em with despair;
Work his tumultuous passions into phrenzy;
Unite them all, then turn them on the foe.

Enter Theseus.

Thes. Was that my queen, my wife, my idol Phædra?
Does she still shun me? Oh, injurious heav'n!
Why did you give me back again to life?
Why did you save me from the rage of battle,
To let me fall by her more fatal hatred?

Lyc. Her hatred! no; she loves you with such fond-
ness

As none but that of Theseus e'er could equal:

- Yet so the gods have doom'd, so heav'n will have it,
- She ne'er must view her much-lov'd Theseus more.

Thes. Not see her! by my suff'rings but I will,
Though troops embattled should oppose my passage,
And ready death shall guard the fatal way.
Not see her! Oh, I'll clasp her in these arms,
Break through the idle bands that yet have held me,
And seize the joys my honest love may claim.

Lyc. Is this a time for joy, when Phædra's grief—

42 PHÆDRA AND HIPPOLITUS.

Thes. Is this a time for grief? Is this my welcome
 ' To air, to life, to liberty, and Crete?
 ' Not this I hop'd, when urg'd by ardent love,
 ' I wing'd my eager way to Phædra's arms;
 ' Then, to my thoughts, relenting Phædra flew,
 ' With open arms to welcome my return;
 ' With kind endearing blame condemn'd my rashness,
 ' And made me swear to venture out no more.
 ' Oh, my warm soul, my boiling fancy glow'd
 ' With charming hopes of yet-untasted joys;
 ' New pleasures fill'd my mind, all dangers, pains,
 ' Wars, wounds, defeats, in that dear hope were lost.
 ' And does she now avoid my eager love?
 ' Pursue me still with unrelenting hatred?
 ' Invent new pains? detest, loath, shun my sight?
 ' Fly my return, and sorrow for my safety?

Lyc. Oh, think not so! for, by th' unerring gods,
 When first I told her of your wish'd return,
 When the lov'd sound of Theseus reach'd her ears,
 At that dear name she rear'd her drooping head,
 ' Her feeble hands, and wat'ry eyes to heav'n,
 ' To bless the bounteous gods: at that dear name
 ' The raging tempest of her grief was calm'd;
 Her sighs were hush'd, and tears forgot to flow.

Thes. Did my return bring comfort to her sorrow?
 Then haste, conduct me to the lovely mourner.
 Oh, I will kiss the pearly drops away;
 ' Suck from her rosy lips the fragrant sighs;
 ' With other sighs her panting breast shall heave,
 ' With other dews her swimming eyes shall melt,
 With other pangs her throbbing heart shall beat,
 And all her sorrows shall be lost in love.

Lyc. Does Theseus burn with such unheard of passion?
 And shall not she with out-stretch'd arms receive him;
 ' And with an equal ardor meet his vows?
 ' The vows of one so dear! Oh, righteous gods!
 Why must the bleeding heart of Theseus bear
 Such tort'ring pangs? while Phædra, dead to love,
 Now with accusing eyes on angry heav'n
 Steadfastly gazes, and upbraids the gods:
 ' Now with dumb piercing grief and humble shame,
 ' Fixes her gloomy watery orbs to earth;

Now burst with swelling anguish, rends the skies'
With loud complaints of her outrageous wrongs.

Thes. Wrongs! is she wrong'd? and lives he yet who wrong'd her?

Lyc. He lives, so great, so happy, so belov'd,
That Phædra scarce can hope, scarce wish revenge.

Thes. Shall Theseus live, and not revenge his Phædra?
Gods! shall this arm, renown'd for righteous vengeance,
For quelling tyrants, and redressing wrongs,
Now fail? now first, when Phædra's injur'd, fail?

Ob. let us haste,

' Speak, Lycon, haste, declare the secret villain,

' The wretch so meanly base to injure Phædra,

' So rashly brave to dare the sword of Theseus.

' *Lyc.* I dare not speak, but sure her wrongs are mighty.

' The pale cold hue that deadens all her charms,

' Her sighs, her hollow groans, her flowing tears

' Make me suspect her monstrous grief will end her.

' *Thes.* End her! end Theseus first, and all mankind;

' But most that villain, that detested slave,

' That brutal coward, that dark lurking wretch.

' *Lyc.* Oh, noble heat of unexampled love!

' This Phædra hop'd, when, in the midst of grief,

' In the wild torrent of o'erwhelming sorrows,

' She groaning still invoc'd, still call'd on Theseus.

' *Thes.* Did she then name me? did the weeping charmer

' Invoke my name, and call for aid on Theseus?

' Oh, that lov'd voice upbraided my delay.

' Why then this stay?' I come, I fly, Oh, Phædra!

Lead on.—Now, dark disturber of my peace,

If now thou'rt known, what luxury of vengeance—

Haste, lead, conduct me.

' *Lyc.* Oh, I beg you stay.

' *Thes.* What, stay when Phædra calls?

Lyc. ' Oh, on my lance,

' By all the gods, my lord, I beg you stay.'

Ob. I conjure you stay,

As you respect your peace, your life, your glory;

' As Phædra's days are precious to your soul;

By all your love, by Phædra's sorrows stay.

Thes.

Thes. Where lies the danger? wherefore should I stay?

Lyc. Your sudden presence would surprize her soul,
Renew the galling image of her wrongs,
‘Revive her sorrow, indignation, shame;’
And all your son would strike her from your eyes.

Thes. My son!— But he’s too good, too brave to
wrong her.—

Whence then that shocking change, that strong surprize,
That fright that seiz’d him at the name of Phædra?

Lyc. Was he surpriz’d? that shew’d at least remorse.

Thes. Remorse! for what? by heav’n’s, my troubled
thoughts

Presage some dire attempts.—Say, what remorse?

Lyc. I would not—yet I must: this you command;
This Phædra orders; thrice her fault’ring tongue
Bade me unfold the guilty scene to Theseus;
‘Thrice with loud cries recall’d me on my way,
And blam’d my speed, and chid my rash obedience,
‘Lest the unwelcome tale should wound your peace.’
At last, with looks serenely sad, she cried,
Go tell it all; but in such artful words,
Such tender accents, and such melting sounds,
As may appease his rage, and move his pity;
As may incline him to forgive his son
A grievous fault, but still a fault of love.

Thes. Of love! what strange suspicions rack my soul!
As you regard my peace, declare what love!

Lyc. Thus urg’d, I must declare. Yet, pitying
heav’n!

Why must I speak? Why must unwilling Lycón
Accuse the prince of impious love to Phædra?

Thes. Love to his mother! to the wife of Theseus!

Lyc. Yes; at the moment first he view’d her eyes,
Ev’n at the altar, when you join’d your hands,
His easy heart receiv’d the guilty flame,
And from that time he press’d her with his passion.

Thes. Then ’twas for this she banish’d him from Crete;
I thought it hatred all. Oh, righteous hatred!
Forgive me, heav’n; forgive me, injur’d Phædra,
That I in secret have condemn’d thy justice.
Oh, ’twas all just, and Theseus shall revenge,
Ev’n on his son, revenge his Phædra’s wrongs.

Lyc.

Lyc. What easy tools are these blunt honest heroes,
Who with keen hunger gorge the naked hook,
Prevent the bait the statesman's art prepares,
And post to ruin—' Go, believing fool,
' Go act thy far-fam'd justice on thy son,
' Next on thyself, and both make way for Lycon.'

[*Aside.*

Thef. Ha! am I sure she's wrong'd? Perhaps 'tis malice.

Slave, make it clear, make good your accusation,
Or treble fury shall revenge my son.

Lyc. Am I then doubted? Can Phædra or your Lycon
Be thought to forge such execrable falsehoods?

' Gods! when the queen unwillingly complains,
' Can you suspect her truth? Oh, godlike Theseus!
' Is this the love you bear unhappy Phædra?
' Is this her hop'd-for aid? Go, wretched matron,
' Sigh to the winds, and read th' unspying heav'n's
' With thy vain sorrows; since relentless Theseus,
' Thy hope, thy refuge, Theseus will not hear thee.

Thef. ' Not hear my Phædra! nor revenge her wrongs!
Speak, make thy proofs, and then his doom's as fix'd,
As when Jove nods, and high Olympus shakes,
And fate his voice obeys.

Lyc. Yet stay, bear witness, heav'n! [*Fetches a sword.*
With what reluctance I produce this sword,
This fatal proof against th' unhappy prince,
Lest it should work your justice to his ruin,
And prove he aim'd at force as well as incest.

Thef. Gods! 'tis illusion all! ' Is this the sword,
' By which Procrustes, Scyron, Pallas fell?
' Is this the weapon which my darling son
' Swore to employ in nought but acts of honour?
' Now, faithful youth, thou nobly hast fulfill'd
' Thy gen'rous promise. Oh, most injur'd Phædra!
' Why did I trust to his deceitful form?
' Why blame thy justice, or suspect thy truth?

Lyc. Had you this morn beheld his ardent eyes,
Seen his arm lock'd in her dishevell'd hair,
That weapon glitt'ring o'er her trembling bosom,
Whilst she with screams refus'd his impious love,
Entreating death, and rising to the wound!

Oh,

• Oh, had you seen her, when th' affrighted youth
 • Retir'd at your approach ; had you then seen her,
 • In the chaste transports of becoming fury,
 • Seize on the sword to pierce her guiltless bosom ;'
 Had you seen this, you could not doubt her truth.

Thes. Oh, impious monster ! Oh, forgive me, Phædra !
 And may the gods inspire my injur'd soul
 With equal vengeance that may suit his crimes.

Lyc. For Phædra's sake forbear to talk of vengeance ;
 That with new pains would wound her tender breast.
 Send him away from Crete, and by his absence
 Give Phædra quiet, and afford him mercy.

Thes. ' Mercy ! for what ? Oh, well has he rewarded
 • Poor Phædra's mercy.—Oh, most barb'rous traitor !
 • To wrong such beauty, and insult such goodness.'
 Mercy ! what's that ? a virtue coined by villains,
 • Who praise the weakness which supports their crimes.'
 Be mute, and fly, lest when my rage is rous'd,
 Thou for thyself in vain implore my mercy.

Lyc. Dull fool, I laugh at mercy more than thou dost,
 More than I do the justice thou'rt so fond of.
 Now come, young hero, to thy father's arms,
 Receive the due reward of haughty virtue ;
 Now boast thy race, and laugh at earth-born Lyeon.

[*Aside and exit.*]

Enter Hippolitus.

Thes. Yet can it be ?—Is this th' incestuous villain ?
 • How great his presence, how erect his look,
 • How ev'ry grace, how all his virtuous mother
 • Shines in his face, and charms me from his eyes !
 • Oh, Neptune ! Oh, great founder of our race !
 • Why was he fram'd with such a godlike look ?'
 Why wears he not some most detested form,
 • Baleful to sight, as horrible to thought ;'
 That I might act my justice without grief,
 Punish the villain, nor regret the son ?

Hip. May I presume to ask, what secret care
 Broods in your breast, and clouds your royal brow ?
 Why dart your awful eyes those angry beams,
 And fright Hippolitus they us'd to cheer ?

Thes. Answer me first. When call'd to wait on Phædra,
 What sudden fear surpriz'd your troubled soul ?

Why

Why did your ebbing blood forsake your cheeks?

Why did you hasten from your father's arms,

To shun the queen your duty bids you please?

Hip. My lord, to please the queen I'm forc'd to shun her,

And keep this hated object from her sight.

Thes. Say, what's the cause of her invet'rate hatred?

Hip. My lord, as yet I never gave her cause.

Thes. 'Oh, were it so!' [*Aside.*] When last did you attend her?

Hip. When last attend her!—Oh, unhappy queen!

Your error's known, yet I disdain to wrong you,

'Or to betray a fault myself have caus'd.' [*Aside.*]

When last attend her?

Thes. Answer me directly;

Nor dare to trifle with your father's rage.

Hip. My lord, this very morn I saw the queen.

Thes. What past?

Hip. I ask'd permission to retire.

Thes. And was that all?

Hip. My lord, I humbly beg,

With the most low submissions, ask no more.

Thes. 'Yet you don't answer with your low submissions.'

Answer, or never hope to see me more.

Hip. Too much he knows, I fear, without my telling;
And the poor queen's betray'd, and lost for ever. [*Aside.*]

Thes. He changes, gods! and falters at the question.
His fears, his words, his looks declare him guilty. [*Aside.*]

Hip. Why do you frown, my lord? Why turn away?
As from some loathsome monster, not your son?

Thes. Thou art that monster, and no more my son.

Not one of those of the most horrid form,
Of which my hand has eas'd the burthen'd earth,
Was half so shocking to my sight as thou.

Hip. Where am I, gods? Is that my father Theseus?
'Am I awake?' Am I Hippolitus.

Thes. Thou art that fiend.—Thou art Hippolitus,
Thou art.—Oh, fall! Oh, fatal stain to honour!

How had my vain imagination form'd thee?

Brave as Alcides, and as Minos just.

Sometimes it led me through the maze of war;

There it survey'd thee ranging through the field,

Mowing

Mowing down troops, and dealing out destruction.

‘ Sometimes with wholesome laws reforming states,

‘ Crowning their happy joys with peace and plenty ;’

While you——

Hip. With all my father’s soul inspir’d,

Burnt with impatient thirst of early honour,

To hunt through bloody fields the chase of glory,

And bless your age with trophies like your own.

Gods, how that warm’d me ! how my throbbing heart

Leap’d to the image of my father’s joy,

When you should strain me in your folding arms,

And with kind raptures, ‘ and with sobbing joys,

‘ Commend my valour, and confess your son !

‘ How did I think my glorious toil o’erpaid !

‘ Then great indeed, and in my father’s love,

‘ With more than conquest crown’d !’

Cry, Go on, Hippolitus.

Go tread the rugged paths of daring honour ;

Practise the strictest and austereſt virtue,

And all the rigid laws of righteous Minos :

Theſeus, thy father Theſeus will reward thee.

Theſ. Reward thee !——Yes ; as Minos would reward thee.

Was Minos then thy pattern ? and did Minos,

The great, the good, the juſt, the righteous Minos,

‘ The judge of hell, and oracle of earth,’

Did he inſpire adultery, force, and inceſt ?

Iſmena appears.

‘ *Iſm.* Ha, what’s this ?

[*Aſide.*]

Hip. Amazement ! inceſt !

Theſ. Inceſt with Phædra, with thy mother Phædra.

Hip. This charge ſo unexpected, ſo amazing,

So new, ſo ſtrange, impoſſible to thought,

Stuns my aſtoniſh’d ſoul, and ties my voice.

‘ *Theſ.* Then let this wake thee, this onco-glorious ſword,

With which thy father arm’d thy infant hand,

Not for this purpoſe. Oh, abandon’d ſlave !

Oh, early villain ! moſt deteſted coward !

With this my inſtrument of youthful glory !

With this t’invade the ſpoileſs Phædra’s honour !

Phædra, my life, my better half, my queen !

That

That very Phædra, for whose just defence
The gods would claim thy sword.

Hip. Amazement! death!
Heav'ns! durst I raise the far-fam'd sword of Theseus
Against his queen, against my mother's bosom?

Thef. If not, declare when, where, and how you lost it?
How Phædra gain'd it?—Oh, all ye gods! he's silent.
Why was it bar'd? Whose bosom was it aim'd at?
What meant thy arm advanc'd, thy glowing cheeks,
Thy hand, heart, eyes? Oh, villain! monstrous villain!

Hip. Is there no way, 'no thought, no beam of light,
'No clue to guide me through this gloomy maze,'
To clear my honour, yet preserve my faith?
'None, none, ye pow'rs! and must I groan beneath
'This execrable load of foul dishonour?
'Must Theseus suffer such unheard of torture?
'Theseus, my father! No.' I'll break through all;
All oaths, all vows, all idle imprecations
I'll give them to the winds. Hear me, my lord;
Hear your wrong'd son. The sword—Oh, fatal vow!
'Ensnaring oaths, and thou, rash thoughtless fool,
'To bind thyself in voluntary chains;
'Yet to thy fatal trust continue firm!
'Beneath disgrace, though infamous, yet honest.'
Yet hear me, father: may the righteous gods
Show'r all their curses on this wretched head;
Oh, may they doom me——

Thef. Yes, the gods will doom thee.
The sword, the sword!—Now swear, and call to witness
Heav'n, hell, and earth, I mark it not from one
That breathes beneath such complicated guilt.

Hip. Was that like guilt, when with expanded arms
I sprang to meet you at your wish'd return?
Does this appear like guilt, when thus serene,
With eyes erect, and visage unappall'd,
Fix'd on that awful face, I stand the charge,
Amaz'd, not fearing? 'Say, if I am guilty;
'Where are the conscious looks, the face now pale,
'Now flushing red, the down-cast haggard eyes,
'Or fix'd on earth, or slowly rais'd to catch
'A fearful view, then sunk again with horror?

E

Thef.

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Thes. This is for raw, untaught, unfinish'd villains.
 'Thou in thy bloom hast reach'd th' abhorr'd perfection :
 'Thy even looks could wear a peaceful calm,
 'The beauteous stamp (Oh, Heav'n's!) of faultless virtue,
 'While thy foul heart contriv'd this horrid deed !
 'Oh, harden'd fiend ! I'll hear no more !
 'Disturb thy soul, or ruffle thy smooth brow !
 'What, no remorse ! no qualms ! no pricking pangs !
 'No feeble struggle of rebelling honour !
 'Oh, 'twas thy joy, thy secret hoard of bliss,
 'To dream, to ponder, act it o'er in thought ;
 'To doat, to dwell on ; as rejoicing misers
 'Brood o'er their precious stores of secret gold.'

Hip. Must I not speak ? Then say, unerring heav'n,
 Why was I born with such a thirst of glory ?
 Why did this morning dawn to my dishonour ?
 Why did not pitying fate with ready death
 Prevent the guilty day ?

Thes. Guilty indeed.

Ev'n at the time you heard your father's death,
 'And such a father (Oh, immortal gods !)
 'As held thee dearer than his life and glory !
 'When thou shouldst rend the skies with clam'rous grief,
 'Beat thy sad breast, and tear thy starting hair ;'
 Then to my bed to force your impious way ;
 'With horrid lust t'insult my yet warm urn ;'
 Make me the scorn of hell, and sport for fiends !
 These are the fun'ral honours paid to Theseus,
 These are the sorrows, these the hallow'd rites,
 To which you'd call your father's hov'ring spirit.

Enter Ismena.

Ism. Hear me, my lord, ere yet you fix his doom :

[*Turning to Theseus.*

Hear one that comes to shield his injur'd honour,
 And guard his life with hazard of her own.

Thes. Though thou'rt the daughter of my hated foe,
 'Though ev'n thy beauty's loathsome to my eyes,'
 Yet justice bids me hear thee.

Ism. Thus I thank you.

[*Kneels.*

Then know, mistaken prince, his honest soul
 Could ne'er be sway'd by impious love to Phædra,
 Since I before engag'd his early vows ;

PHÆDRA AND HIPPOLITUS.

- With all my wiles subdu'd his struggling heart ;
- For long his duty struggled with his love.'

Thes. Speak, is this true ? On thy obedience, speak.

Hip. So charg'd, I own the dang'rous truth ; I own,
Against her will, I lov'd the fair Ismena.

Thes. Canst thou be only clear'd by disobedience,
And justified by crimes ? What, love my foe !

- Love one descended from a race of tyrants,
- Whose blood yet reeks on my avenging sword !'

I'm curst each moment I delay thy fate.

Haste to the shades, ' and tell the happy Pallas

• Ismena's flames, and let him taste such joys

• As thou giv'st me ;' go, tell applauding Minos

The pious love you bore his daughter Phædra ;

Tell it the chatt'ring ghosts, and hissing furies ;

Tell it the grinning fiends, till hell found nothing

To thy pleas'd ears but Phædra, thy mother Phædra ?

Here, guards.

Enter Cratander and Guards.

Seize him, Cratander ; take this guilty sword,

Let his own hand avenge the crimes it acted,

And bid him die, at least, like Theseus' son.

Take him away, and execute my orders.

Hip. Heav'n's ! how that strikes me ! how it wounds
my soul

To think of your unutterable sorrows,

When you shall find Hippolitus was guiltless !

Yet when you know the innocence you doom'd,

When you shall mourn your son's unhappy fate,

Oh, I beseech you, by the love you bore me,

With my last words (my words will then prevail)

Oh, for my sake, forbear to touch your life,

Nor wound again Hippolitus in Theseus.

• Let all my virtues, all my joys survive

• Fresh in your breast, but be my woes forgot ;

• The woes, which fate, and not my father, wrought.

• Oh, let me dwell for ever in your thoughts,

• Let me be honour'd still, but not deplor'd.

Thes. ' Then thy chief care is for thy father's life.

• Oh, blooming hypocrite ! Oh, young dissembler !

• Well hast thou shewn the care thou tak'st of Theseus.'

Oh, all ye gods ! how this enflames my fury.

I scarce can hold my rage ; my eager hands
Tremble to reach thee. No, dishonour'd Theseus,
Blot not thy fame with such a monster's blood.
Snatch him away.

Hip. Lead on. Farewel, Ismena. [*Exit guarded.*]

Ism. Oh, take me with him, let me share his fate.
Oh, awful Theseus ! yet revoke his doom.

' See, see the very ministers of death,
' Though bred to blood, yet shrink, and wish to save him.'

Thes. Slaves, villains, *drag her away.*

' *Ism.* Oh, tear me, cut me, till my sever'd limbs
' Grow to my lord, and share the pains he suffers.

' *Thes.* Villains, away !'

Ism. Oh, Theseus ! hear me, hear me.

' *Thes.* Away, nor taint me with thy loathsome touch.
' Off, woman !'

Ism. Oh, let me stay ! I'll tell you all.

[*Exit Theseus.*]

' Already gone. Tell it, ye conscious walls ;
' Bear it, ye winds, upon your pitying wings ;
' Resound it, Fame, with all your hundred tongues.
' Oh, hapless youth ! all heaven conspires against you.
' The conscious walls conceal the fatal secret ;
' Th' untainted winds refuse th' infecting load,
' And Fame itself is mute. Nay, ev'n Ismena,
' Thy own Ismena's sworn to thy destruction.
' But still, whate'er the cruel gods design,
' In the same fate our equal stars combine,
' And he who dooms thy death pronounces mine.'

Thes. Too well I know the truth ;

*What cou'd she tell me but fictitious art,
By woman's art deriv'd to turn the course
Of justice from a wretch, whose death both gods
And men demand of Theseus.*

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

Enter Phædra and Lycon.

LYCON.

ACCUSE yourself! On my knees I beg you,
By all the gods, recal the fatal message.
Heav'n's! will you stand the dreadful rage of Theseus?
And brand your fame, and work your own destruction?

Phæd. By thee I'm branded, and by thee destroy'd;
Thou bosom serpent! thou alluring fiend!

Yet shan't you boast the miseries you cause,
Nor 'scape the ruin you have brought on all.

Lyc. Was it not your command? Has faithful Lycon
E'er spoke, e'er thought, 'design'd, contriv'd, or acted?
'Has he done aught' without the queen's consent?

Phæd. Plead'st thou consent to what thou first in-
spir'dst?

'Was that consent? Oh, senseless politician!

'When adverse passions struggled in my breast,

'When anger, fear, love, sorrow, guilt, despair,

'Drove out my reason, and usurp'd my soul.

'Yet this consent you plead, Oh, faithless Lycon!

'Oh, only zealous for the fame of Phædra!

'With this you blot my name, and clear your own;

'And what's my phrenzy shall be call'd my crime.

'What then is thine? thou cool, deliberate villain!

'Thou wife, fore-thinking, weighing politician!

Lyc. Oh, 'twas so black a charge, my tongue recoil'd
At its own sound, and horror shook my soul.

Yet still, though pierc'd with such amazing anguish,

Such was my zeal, so much I lov'd my queen,

I broke through all, to save the life of Phædra.

Phæd. What's life? Oh, all ye gods! can life atone

For all the monstrous crimes by which 'tis bought?

Or can I live, when thou, Oh, foul of honour!

Oh, early hero! by my crimes art ruin'd?

Perhaps ev'n now the great unhappy youth

Falls by the sordid hands of butchering villains;

Now, now he bleeds, he dies. — 'Oh, perjur'd traitor!

'See, his rich blood in purple torrents flows,

'And Nature fallies in unbidden groans;

' Now mortal pangs distort his lovely form,
 ' His rosy beauties fade, his starry eyes
 ' Now darkling swim, and fix their closing beams ;
 ' Now in short gasps his lab'ring spirit heaves,
 ' And weakly flutters on his fault'ring tongue,
 ' And struggles into sound.' Hear, monster, hear,
 With his last breath he curses perjur'd Phædra ;
 He summons Phædra to the bar of Minos :
 Thou too shalt there appear ; to torture thee
 Whole hell shall be employ'd, and suff'ring Phædra
 Shall find some ease, to see thee still more wretched.

Lyc. Oh, all ye pow'rs ! Oh, Phædra, hear me, hear
 ' By all my zeal, by all my anxious cares, [me,
 ' By those unhappy crimes I wrought to serve you,'
 By these old wither'd limbs, and hoary hairs,
 By all my tears—Oh, heav'ns ! she minds me not ;
 She hears not my complaints. Oh, wretched Lycon !
 To what art thou reserv'd ?

Phæd. Reserv'd to all
 The sharpest, slowest pains that earth can furnish :
 To all I wish—on Phædra——Guards, secure him.
 [*The Guards enter, and carry off Lycon.*]
 Ha, Theseus !—Gods !—my freezing blood congeals,
 And all my thoughts, designs, and words are lost.

Enter Theseus.

Thes. Dost thou at last repent, Oh, lovely Phædra !
 At last with equal ardor meet my vows ?
 ' Oh, dear-bought blessing !—Yet I'll not complain,
 ' Since now my sharpest grief is all o'er-paid,
 ' And only heightens joy——Then haste, my charmer,
 ' Let's feast our famish'd souls with amorous riot,
 ' With fiercest blifs atone for our delay,
 ' And in a moment love the age we've lost.'

Phæd. Stand off ; approach me, touch me not ; fly
 Far as the distant skies, or deepest centre. [hence,

Thes. Amazement ! death ! Ye gods, who guide the
 What can this mean ? ' So fierce a detestation, [world,
 ' So strong abhorrence !—Speak, exquisite tormentor !
 ' Was it for this your summons fill'd my soul
 ' With eager raptures and tumultuous transports ;
 ' Ev'n painful joys, and agonies of blifs ;'
 Did I for this obey my Phædra's call,

And

And fly, with trembling haste, to meet her arms ?

And am I thus receiv'd ? Oh, cruel Phædra !

' Was it for this you rouz'd my drowzy soul

' From the dull lethargy of hopelefs love ?

' And dost thou only shew those beauteous eyes

' To wake despair, and blast me with their beams ?

' *Phæd.* Oh, were that all to which the gods have
doom'd me !

' But angry Heav'n has laid in store for Theseus

' Such perfect mischief, such transcendent woe,

' That the black image shocks my frightened soul,

' And the words die on my reluctant tongue.

' *Thes.* Fear not to speak it ; that harmonious voice

' Will make the saddest tale of sorrow pleasing,

' And charm the grief it brings. Thus, let me hear it ;

' Thus in thy sight, thus gazing on those eyes

' I can support the utmost spite of fate,

' And stand the rage of Heav'n—Approach, my fair.'

Phæd. Off, or I fly for ever from thy sight.

Shall I embrace the father of Hippolitus ?

Thes. Forget the villain ; drive him from your soul.

' *Phæd.* Can I forget, or drive him from my soul ?

' Oh, he will still be present to my eyes !

' His words will ever echo in my ears ;

' Still will he be the torture of my days,

' Bane of my life, and ruin of my glory.

' *Thes.* And mine and all. Oh, most abandon'd villain !

' Oh, lasting scandal to our godlike race,

' That could contrive a crime so foul as incest !

' *Phæd.* Incest ! Oh, name it not !

' The very mention shakes my inmost soul ;

' The gods are startled in their peaceful mansions ;

' And nature sickens at the shocking sound.

' Thou brutal wretch ! thou execrable monster !

' To break thro' all the laws that early flow

' From untaught reason, and distinguish man :

' Mix like the senseless herd with bestial lust,

' Mother and son preposterously wicked ;

' To banish from thy soul the reverence due

' To honour, nature, and the genial bed,

' And injure one so great, so good as Theseus !

' *Thes.* To injure one so great, so good as Phædra.'

Oh,

Oh, slave! to wrong such purity as thine;
Such dazzling brightness, such exalted virtue.

Phæd. Virtue! all-seeing gods, ye know my virtue.
Must I support all this? Oh, righteous Heav'n!
Can't I yet speak? Reproach I could have borne,
Pointed his satire's stings, and edg'd his rage:
But to be prais'd——Now, Minos, I defy thee;
Ev'n all thy dreadful magazines of pains,
Stones, furies, wheels, are slight to what I suffer,
And hell itself's relief.

Thes. What's hell to thee?

' What crimes couldst thou commit, or what reproaches
' Could innocence so pure as Phædra's fear?
' Oh, thou'rt the chastest matron of thy sex,
' The fairest pattern of excelling virtue!
' Our latest annals shall record thy glory,
' The maid's example, and the matron's theme.
' Each skilful artist shall express thy form
' In animated gold. The threat'ning sword
' Shall hang for ever o'er thy snowy bosom;
' Such heav'nly beauty on thy face shall bloom
' As shall almost excuse the villain's crime;
' But yet that firmness, that unshaken virtue,
' As still shall make the monster more detested.
' Where-e'er you pass, the crowded way shall sound
' With joyful cries, and endless acclamations.
' And when aspiring bards, in daring strains,
' Shall raise some heav'nly matron to the pow'rs, [*dra.*
' They'll say, She's great, she's true, she's chaste as Phæ-
' *Phæd.* This might have been—but now, Oh, cruel
' Now, as I pass, the crowded way shall sound [*stars!*
' With hissing scorn, and murm'ring detestation.
' The latest annals shall record my shame;
' And when th' avenging muse, with pointed rage,
' Would sink some impious woman down to hell,
' She'll say, She's false, she's base, she's foul as Phædra.
' *Thes.* Hadst thou been foul, had horrid violation
Cast any stains on purity like thine,
They're wash'd already in the villain's blood;
The very sword, his instrument of horror,
' Ere this time drench'd in his incestuous heart,'

Hath

Hath done thee justice, ' and aveng'd the crimes
' He us'd it to perform.'

Enter Messenger.

Mess. Alas, my lord,
Ere this the prince is dead ! I saw Cratander
Give him a sword ; I saw him boldly take it,
Rear it on high, and point it to his breast.
With steady hands, and with disdainful looks,
As one that fear'd not death, but scorn'd to die,
And not in battle. A loud clamour follow'd ;
And the furrounding soldiers hid from fight ;
But all pronounc'd him dead.

Phæd. Is he then dead ?

Thes. Yes, yes, he's dead ; and dead by my command,
And in this dreadful act of mournful justice
I'm more renown'd, than in my dear-bought laurels.

Phæd. Then thou'rt renown'd indeed.——Oh, happy
Oh, only worthy of the love of Phædra ! [Theseus !
Haste, then, let's join our well-met hands together,
Unite for ever, and defy the gods
To shew a pair so eminently wretched. [praise me ;

Thes. Wretched ! for what ? For what the world must
For what the nations shall adore my justice ;
A villain's death ?

Phæd. Hippolitus a villain !
Oh, he was all his godlike fire could wish ;
The pride of Theseus, and the hopes of Crete !
Nor did the bravest of his godlike race
Tread with such early hopes the paths of honour. [dra,

Thes. What can this mean ? Declare, ambiguous Phæ-
' Say, whence these shifting gusts of clashing rage ?
' Why are thy doubted speeches dark and troubled,
' As Cretan seas when vex'd by warring winds ?'
Why is a villain, with alternate passion,
Accus'd and prais'd, detested and deplor'd ?

Phæd. Canst thou not guess ?
Canst thou not read it in my furious passions ?
In all the wild disorders of my soul ?
Couldst thou not see it in the noble warmth
That urg'd the darling youth to acts of honour ?
' Couldst thou not find it in the gen'rous truth
' Which sparkled in his eyes, and open'd in his face ?'
Couldst

Couldst not perceive it in the chaste reserve,
In every word and look, each godlike act,
Couldst thou not see Hippolitus was guiltless?

Thes. Guiltless! Oh, all ye gods! what can this mean?

Phæd. Mean! that the guilt is mine, that virtuous
The maid's example, and the matron's theme, [Phædra,
With bestial passion woo'd your loathing son,
And when deny'd, with impious accusation
Sullied the lustre of his shining honour;
Of my own crimes accus'd the faultless youth,
And with ensnaring wiles destroy'd that virtue
I try'd in vain to shake.

Thes. Is he then guiltless?

Guiltless? Then what art thou? And, Oh, just Heav'n!
What a detested parricide is Theseus?

Phæd. What am I? What, indeed, but one more black
That earth or hell e'er bore? 'Oh, horrid mixture
'Of crimes and woes, of parricide and incest,
'Perjury and murder; to arm the erring father
'Against the guiltless son!' Oh, impious Lycon,
In what a hell of woes thy arts have plung'd me!

Thes. Lycon!—Here, guards!—Oh, most abandon'd villain!

Secure him, seize him, drag him piece-meal hither.

Enter Guards.

Gua. Who has, my lord, incur'd your high displeasure?

Thes. Who can it be, ye gods, but perjur'd Lycon?
Who can inspire such storms of rage, but Lycon?
Where has my sword left one so black, but Lycon?
Where, wretched Theseus! in thy bed and heart,
The very darling of my soul and eyes.
Oh, beauteous fiend! But trust not to thy form.

'You too, my son, were fair; your manly beauties
'Charm'd ev'ry heart (Oh, heav'n's!) to your destruction;
'You too were good, your virtuous soul abhorr'd
'The crimes for which you died. Oh, impious Phædra!
Incestuous fury! execrable murd'ers!

Is there revenge on earth, or pain in hell;
Can art invent, or boiling rage suggest,
Ev'n endless torture, which thou shalt not suffer?

Phæd. And is there aught on earth I would not suffer?
Oh, were there vengeance equal to my crimes,

Thou

Thou needst not claim it, most unhappy youth,
From any hands but mine ! T' avenge thy fate,
I'd court the fiercest pains, ' and sue for tortures,'
And Phædra's suff'rings should atone for thine ;
Ev'n now I fall a victim to thy wrongs ;
Ev'n now a fatal draught works out my soul ;
Ev'n now it curdles in my shrinking veins
The lazy blood, and freezes at my heart.

Lycon brought in.

Thes. Hast thou escap'd my wrath ? Yet, impious Ly-
On thee I'll empty all my hoard of vengeance, [con,
And glut my boundless rage.

Lyc. Oh, mercy, mercy !

Thes. Such thou shalt find as thy best deeds deserve ;
' Such as thy guilty soul can hope from Theseus ;
' Such as thou shew'dst to poor Hippolitus.'

Lyc. ' Oh, chain me, whip me, let me be the scorn
' Of fordid rabbles, and insulting crowds ;'
Give me but life, and make that life most wretched.

' *Phæd.* Art thou so base, so spiritless a slave ?
' Not so the lovely youth thy arts have ruin'd,
' Not so he bore the fate to which you doom'd him.

' *Thes.* Oh, abject villain !—Yet it gives me joy
' To see the fears that shake thy guilty soul,
' Enhance thy crimes, and antedate thy woes.
' Oh, how thou'lt howl thy fearful soul away,
' While laughing crowds shall echo to thy cries,
' And make thy pains their sport.' Haste, ' hence,' away
with him,

Drag him to all the torments earth can furnish ;
Let him be rack'd and gash'd, impal'd alive ;
Then let the mangled monster, fix'd on high,
Grin o'er the shouting crowds, and glut their vengeance.

Hence, away ! [Lycon borne off.

And is this all ? And art thou now appeas'd ?

Will this atone for poor Hippolitus ?

Oh, ungorg'd appetite ! Oh, rav'nous thirst
Of a son's blood ! What, not a day, a moment ?

Phæd. A day, a moment ! Oh, thou shouldst have staid
Years, ages, all the round of circling time,
Ere touch'd the life of that consummate youth !

Thes. And yet with joy I flew to his destruction,

Boasted

Boasted his fate, and triumph'd in his ruin.
 Not this I promis'd to his dying mother,
 When, in her mortal pangs, she sighing gave me
 The last cold kisses from her trembling lips,
 ' And reach'd her feeble wand'ring hand to mine ;
 ' When her last breath now quiv'ring at her mouth,
When her last words now fall'ring from her tongue,
 Implor'd my goodness to her lovely son,
 To her Hippolitus. He, alas ! descends
 An early victim to the lazy shades,
 (Oh, heav'n and earth !) by Theseus doom'd, descends.

Phæ. He's doom'd by Theseus, but accus'd by Phædra,
 By Phædra's madness and by Lycon's hatred.

Yet, with my life I expiate my frenzy,
 And die for thee, my headlong rage destroy'd.
 ' Thee I pursue (Oh, great ill-fated youth)
 ' Pursue thee still, but now with chaste desires ;
 ' Thee thro' the dismal waste of gloomy death,
 ' Thee thro' the glimm'ring dawn, and purer day,
 ' Thro' all th' Elyfian plains——Oh, righteous Minos !
 ' Elyfian plains ! there he and his Ismena
 ' Shall sport for ever, shall for ever drink
 ' Immortal love ; while I far off shall howl
 ' In lonely plains, while all the blackest ghosts
 ' Shrink from the baleful sight of one more monstrous
 ' And more accus'd than they.'

Thes. I too must die ;
 I too must once more see the burning shore
 Of livid Acheron and black Cocytus,
 Whence no Alcides will release me now.

Phæd. Then why this stay ? Come on, let's plunge to-
 See, Hell sets wide its adamantine gates ; [gether.
 ' See, thro' the sable gates the black Cocytus
 ' In smoky circles rows its fiery waves ;'
 Hear, hear the stunning harmonies of woe,
 The din of rattling chains, of clashing whips,
 Of groans, or loud complaints, of piercing shrieks,
 That wide thro' all its gloomy world resound.
 How huge Megara stalks ! what streaming fires
 Blaze from her glaring eyes ! what serpents curl
 In horrid wreaths, and hiss around her head !
 Now, now she drags me to the bar of Minos ;

See how the awful judges of the dead
 Look stedfast hate, and horrible dismay !
 See, Minos turns away his loathing eyes ;
 ' Rage chokes his struggling words ; the fatal urn
 ' Drops trembling from his hand.' Oh, all ye gods !
 What, Lycon here ? Oh, execrable villain !
 Then am I still on earth ? By hell I am,
 A fury now, a scourge preserv'd for Lycon.
 See, the just beings offer to my vengeance
 That impious slave. Now, Lycon, for revenge :
 Thanks, Heav'n, 'tis here. I'll strike it to his heart.

[*My flaking Theseus for Lycon, offers to stab him.*

' Gwa. Heav'n's ! 'tis your lord.'

Phæd. My lord ! Oh, equal Heav'n !

Must each portentous moment rise in crimes,
 And sallying life go off in parricide ?
 This glimpse of reason some indulgent god
 Hath granted me, to close the scene of guilt.
 Then trust not thy slow drugs—Thus sure of death,
 Complete thy horrors—And if this suffice not,
 Thou, Minos, do the rest. [*Stabs herself.*

Thes. Desp'rate to the last—in ev'ry passion furious.

Phæd. I ask not,

Nor do I hope from thee forgiveness, Theseus ;
 But yet, amidst my crimes, remember still,
 That my offence was not my nature's fault.
 The wrath of Venus, which pursues our race,
 First kindled in my breast those guilty fires.
 Resistless goddess, I confess thy pow'r,
 To thee I make libation of my blood.

Venus, avert thy hate—May wretched Phædra
 Prove the last victim of her fated line.

[*Pier.*

Thes. ' At length she's quiet, she's dead ;
 And now earth bears not such a wretch as Theseus.
 ' Yet I'll obey Hippolitus, and live :

' Then to the wars ; and as the Corybantes,
 ' With clashing shields, and braying trumpets, drown'd
 ' The cries of infant Jove, I'll stifle conscience,
 ' And Nature's murmurs, in the din of arms.
 ' But what are arms to me ? Is he not dead
 ' For whom I fought ; for whom my hoary age
 ' Glow'd with the boiling heat of youth in battle ?'

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How then to drag a wretched life, beneath
 An endless round of still-returning woes,
 And all the gnawing pangs of vain remorse?
 What torment's this?—Therefore, Oh, greatly thought!
 Therefore do justice on thyself, and live;
 Live above all most infinitely wretched.
 Ismena too——Nay then, avenging Heav'n

Enter Ismena.

Has vented all its rage——Oh, wretched maid!
 Why dost thou come to swell my raging grief?
 • Why add to sorrows, and embitter woes?
 • Why do thy mournful eyes upbraid my guilt?
 Why thus recall to my afflicted soul
 The sad remembrance of my godlike son,
 Of that dear youth my cruelty has murder'd?
*Oh, gods, your reddest bolts of fire
 Had dealt less torment to my suff'ring frame,
 Than that destructive word hath giv'n my heart!
 Life yields beneath the sound.*

• *Ism.* Ruin'd! Oh, all ye powers! Oh, awful Theseus!
 • Say, where's my lord? Say, where has fate dispos'd him?
 • Oh, speak! the fear distracts me.
 • *Thes.* Gods! can I speak?
 • Can I declare his fate to his Ismena?
 • Oh, lovely maid! couldst thou admit of comfort,
 • Thou shouldst for ever be my only care,
 • Work of my life, and labour of my soul.
 • For thee alone my sorrows, lull'd, shall cease,
 • Cease for a while to mourn my murder'd son;
 • For thee alone my sword once more shall rage,
 • Restore the crown of which it robb'd your race.
 • Then let your grief give way to thoughts of empire;
 • At thy own Athens reign. The happy crowd
 • Beneath the easy yoke with pleasure bow,
 • And think in thee their own Minerva reigns.
 • *Ism.* Must I then reign; nay, must I live without him?
 • Not so, Oh, godlike youth! you lov'd Ismena:
 • You, for her sake, refus'd the Cretan empire,
 • And yet a nobler gift, the royal Phædra.
 • Shall I then take a crown, a guilty crown,
 • From the relentless hand that doom'd thy death?

• Oh,

- Oh, 'tis in death alone I can have ease,
- And thus I find it. *[Offers to stab herself.]*

Enter Hippolitus.

- *Hip.* Oh, forbear, Ismena !
- Forbear, chaste maid, to wound thy tender bosom.
- Oh, heav'n and earth ! should she resolve to die,
- And snatch all beauty from the widow'd earth ?
- Was it for me, ye gods, she'd fall a victim ?
- Was it for me she'd die ? Oh, heav'nly virgin !

Revive, Ismena,

Return to light, to happiness, and love ;

See, see thy own Hippolitus, who lives,

And hopes to live for thee.

Ism. Hippolitus !

- Am I alive or dead ? Is this Elysium ?
- 'Tis he, 'tis all Hippolitus. Art well ?
- Art thou not wounded ?

Thef. Oh, unhop'd-for joy !

Stand off, and let me fly into his arms.

Speak, say, what god, what miracle preserv'd thee :

Didst thou not strike thy father's cruel present,

My sword, into thy breast ?

Hip. I aim'd it there ;

But turn'd it from myself, and slew Cratander :

The guards, not trusted with his fatal orders,

Granted my wish, and brought me to the king.

I fear'd not death ; but could not bear the thought

Of Theseus' sorrow, and Ismena's loss ;

Therefore I hasten'd to your royal presence,

Here to receive my doom.

Thef. Be this thy doom,

To live for ever in Ismena's arms.

Go, heav'nly pair, and with your dazzling virtues,

Your courage, truth, your innocence and love,

Amaze and charm mankind ; and rule that empire,

For which in vain your rival fathers fought.

Ism. Oh, killing joy !

Hip. Oh, extacy of bliss !

Am I possess'd at last of my Ismena,

Of that celestial maid ? Oh, pitying gods !

How shall I thank your bounties for my suff'rings,

For all my pains, and all the pangs I've borne,

PHÆDRA AND HIPPOLITUS.

‘ Since ’twas to them I owe divine Ismena,
 ‘ To them I owe the dear consent of Theseus ?
 Yet there’s a pain lies heavy on my heart,
 For the disastrous fate of hapless Phædra.

Thes. Deep was her anguish for the wrongs she did you.
 She chose to die, and in her death deplor’d
 Your fate, and not her own.

Hip. ‘ I’ve heard it all.’ *Unhappy Phædra !*
 ‘ Oh, had not passion fully’d her renown,
 ‘ None e’er on earth had shone with equal lustre,
 ‘ So glorious liv’d, or so lamented died.
 ‘ Her faults were only faults of raging love,
 ‘ Her virtues all her own.

‘ *Ism.* Unhappy Phædra !
 ‘ Was there no other way, ye plying powers,
 ‘ No other way to crown Ismena’s love ?
 ‘ Then must I ever mourn her cruel fate,
 ‘ And in the midst of my triumphant joy,
 ‘ Ev’n in my hero’s arms, confess some sorrow.’

Thes. ‘ Oh, tender maid, forbear with ill-earn’d grief
 ‘ To damp our blessings, and incense the gods !
 But let’s away, and pay kind Heav’n our thanks,
 For all the wonders in our favour wrought ;
 That Heav’n, whose mercy rescu’d erring Theseus
 From execrable crimes, and endless woes.
 Then learn from me, ye kings that rule the world :
 With equal poize let steady justice sway,
 And flagrant crimes with certain vengeance pay,
 But till the proofs are clear, the stroke delay.

‘ *Hip.* The righteous gods, that innocence require,
 ‘ Protect the goodness which themselves inspire ;
 ‘ Unguarded virtue human arts defies,
 ‘ Th’ accus’d is happy, while th’ accuser dies.’

[*Exeunt.*]

END of the FIFTH ACT.

E P I L O G U E.

Written by Mr. PRIOR.

LADIES, to-night your pity I implore,
 For one who never troubled you before
 An Oxford man, extremely read in Greek,
 Who from Eu—ripides makes Phædra speak;
 And comes to town to let us moderns know
 How women lov'd two thousand years ago.
 If that be all, said I, e'en burn your play,
 Egad, we know all that as well as they:
 Shew us the handsome youthful charioteer,
 Firm in his seat, and running his career;
 Our souls would kindle with as gen'rous flames
 As e'er inspir'd the ancient Grecian dames:
 Ev'ry Ismena would resign her breast,
 And ev'ry dear Hippolitus be blest.
 But, as it is, six flouncing Flanders mares
 Are e'en as good as any two of theirs;
 And if Hippolitus can but contrive
 To buy the gilded chariot, John can drive.
 Now of the bustle you have seen to-day,
 And Phædra's morals, in this scholar's play;
 Something, at last, in justice, should be said,
 But this Hippolitus so fills one's head——
 Well, Phædra liv'd as chaste as she cou'd,
 For she was father Jove's own flesh and blood;
 Her awkward love, indeed, was oddly fated,
 She and her Poly were too near related;
 And yet that scruple had been laid aside,
 If honest Theseus had but fairly dy'd:

E P I L O G U E.

*But when he came, what needed he to know,
 But that all matters stood in statu quo :
 There was no harm, you see ; or, grant there were,
 She might want conduct, but he wanted care.
 'Twas in a husband little less than rude,
 Upon his wife's retirement to intrude :
 He should have sent a night or two before,
 That he would come exact at such an hour ;
 Then he had turn'd all tragedy to jest,
 Found ev'ry thing contribute to his rest ;
 The picquet friend dismiss'd, the coast all clear,
 And spouse alone, impatient for her dear.
 But if these gay reflections come too late
 To keep the guilty Phædra from her fate,
 If your more serious judgment must condemn
 The dire effects of her unhappy flame ;
 Yet, ye chaste matrons, and ye tender fair,
 Let love and innocence engage your care ;
 My spotless flames to your protection take,
 And spare poor Phædra for Ismena's sake.*



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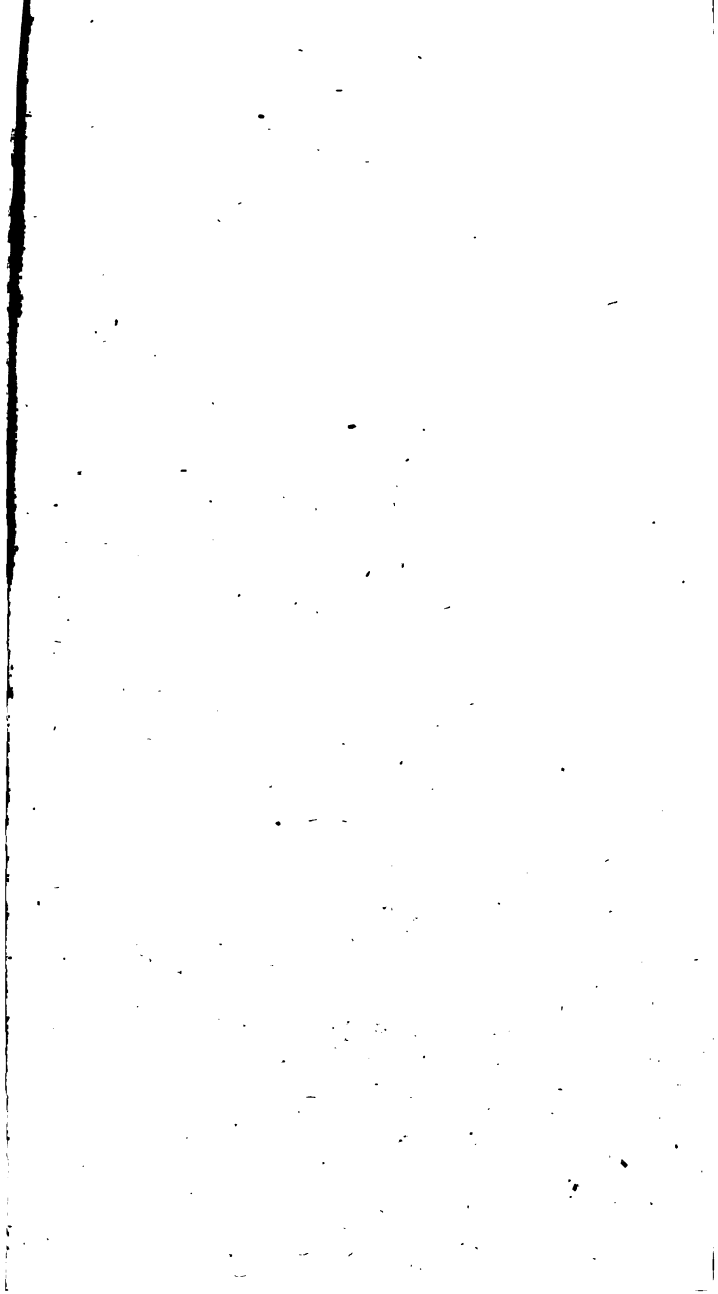
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MONTHLY REVIEW.







Roberts del.

Published for Wells British Theatre Nov. 1777.

M^{rs} HARTLEY in the Character of **IMOINDA**.

I fear no danger, life, or death, I will enjoy with you.

O R O O N O K O:

A

T R A G E D Y.

WRITTEN BY

THOMAS SOUTHERN.

Marked with the VARIATIONS in the

M A N A G E R ' s B O O K,

A T T H E

Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane.

L O N D O N :

Printed for C. BATHURST, W. LOWNDES, W. NICOLL,
T. WHIELDON, and W. FOX.

M.DCC.LXXXV.

 The Reader is desired to observe, that the Passages omitted in the Representation at the Theatres are here preserved, and marked with inverted Commas; as in the Whole of Page 6.

P R O L O G U E.

*AS when in hostile times two neighbouring states
 Strive by themselves and their confederates :
 The war at first is made with awkward skill,
 And soldiers clumsily each other kill,
 Till time at length their untaught fury tames,
 And into rules their heedless rage reclaims :
 Then ev'ry science by degrees is made
 Subservient to the man-destroying trade :
 Wit, wisdom, reading, observation, art ;
 A well-turn'd head to guide a generous heart.
 So it may prove with our contending stages,
 If you will kindly but supply their wages :
 Which you with ease may furnish, by retrenching
 Your superfluities of wine and wenching.
 Who'd grudge to spare from riot and hard drinking,
 To lay it out on means to mend his thinking ?
 To follow such advice you should have leisure,
 Since what refines your sense refines your pleasures.
 Women grown tame by use each fool can get,
 But cuckolds all are made by men of wit.
 To virgin favours fools have no pretence ;
 For maidenheads were made for men of sense.
 'Tis not enough to have a horse well bred,
 To show his mettle he must be well fed ;
 Nor is it all in provender and breed,
 He must be try'd and strain'd to mend his speed.
 A favour'd poet, like a pamper'd horse,
 Will strain his eye-balls out to win the course.
 Do you but in your wisdom vote it fit
 To yield due succours to this war of wit,
 The buskins with more grace should tread the stage,
 Love sigh in softer strains, heroes less rage ;
 Satire shall show a triple row of teeth,
 And comedy shall laugh your sins to death :
 Wit shall refine, and Pegasus shall foam,
 And soar in search of ancient Greece and Rome.
 And since the nation's in the conquering fit,
 As you by arms, we'll vanquish France in wit.
 The works were over, cou'd our poets write
 With half the spirit that our soldiers fight.*

Dramatis Personæ, 1785.

M E N.

Aboan,
 Lieutenant Governor,
 Oroonoko,
 Blandford,
 Hotman,
 Stanmore,
 J. Stannere,
 Daniel,
 Captain Drivet,

Drury-Lane.

Mr. PALMER.
 Mr. FARREN.
 Mr. BANNISTER, jun.
 Mr. J. AICKIN.
 Mr. WILLIAMES.
 Mr. R. PALMER.
 Mr. NORRIS.
 Mr. SUETT.
 Mr. WRIGHTEN.

Covent-Garden.

Mr. AICKIN.
 Mr. DAVIES.
 Mr. POPE.
 Mr. HULL.
 Mr. THOMPSON.
 Mr. CUBITT.
 Mr. HELME.
 Mr. QUICK.
 Mr. FEARON.

W O M E N.

Widow Lackitt,
 Charlotte Weldon,
 Lucy Weldon,
 Imoinda,

Mrs. HOPKINS.

Miss COLLET.

Miss SIMSON.

Miss KEMBLE.

Mrs. WEBB.

Mrs. BATES.

Mrs. INCHBALD.

Miss YOUNGE.

Planters, Indians, Negroes, Men, Women, and Children.

The SCENE *Surinam*, a Colony in the *West-Indies*, at the Times of the Action of this Tragedy in the Possession of the *English*.

O R O O N O K O.

A C T I.

Enter Charlotte Weldon, in Man's Cloaths, following Lucy.

Luc. **W**HAT will this come to, what can it end in? you have persuaded me to leave dear *England*, and dearer *London*, the place of the world most worthy living in, to follow you a husband hunting into *America*: I thought husbands grew in these plantations.

Weld. Why so they do, as thick as oranges ripening one under another. Week after week they drop into some woman's mouth: 'Tis but a little patience, spreading your apron in expectation, and one of 'em will fall into your lap at last.

Luc. Ay, say you so, indeed.

Weld. But you have left dear *London*, you say: Pray what have you left in *London* that was very dear to you, that had not left you before.

Luc. Speak for yourself, sister.

Weld. Nay, I'll keep you in countenance. The young fellows, you know, the dearest part of the town, and without whom *London* had been a wilderness to you and me, had forsaken us a great while.

Luc. Forsaken us! I don't know that ever they had us.

Weld. Forsaken us the worst way, child; that is, did not think us worth having; they neglected us, no longer design'd upon us, they were tir'd of us. Women in *London* are like the rich silks, they are out of fashion, a great while before they wear out.—

Luc. The devil take the fashion, I say.

Weld. You may tumble them over and over at their first coming up, and never disparage their price; but they fall upon wearing immediately, lower and lower in their value, till they come to the broker at last.

Luc. Ay, aye, that's the merchant they deal with. The men would have us at their own scandalous rates; their plenty makes them wanton, and in a little time, I suppose, they wou't know what they would have of the women themselves.

Wild. O yes, they know what they would have. They would have a woman give the town a pattern of her person and beauty, and not stay in it so long to have the whole piece worn out. They would have the good face only discover'd, and not the folly that commonly goes along with it. They say there is a vast stock of beauty in the nation, but a great part of it lies in unprofitable hands; therefore, for the good of the public, they would have a draught made once a quarter, send the decaying beauties for breeders into the country, to make room for new faces to appear, to countenance the pleasures of the town.

Luc. 'Tis very hard, the men must be young as long as they live, and poor women be thought decaying and unfit for the town at one and twenty. I'm sure we were not seven years in London.

Wild. Not half the time taken notice of, sister. The two or three last years we could make nothing of it, even in a vizard-mask; not in a vizard-mask, that has cheated many man into an old acquaintance. Our faces began to be as familiar to the men of intrigue as their duns, and as much avoided. We durst not appear in public places, and were almost grudg'd a gallery in the churches: Even there they had their jests upon us, and cry'd, she's in the right on't, good gentlewoman, since no man considers her body, she does very well indeed to take care of her soul.

Luc. Such unmannerly fellows there will always be.

Wild. Then you may remember we were reduc'd to the last necessity, the necessity of making silly visits to our civil acquaintance, to bring us into tolerable company. Nay, the young inns of court beads, of but one term's standing in the fashion, who knew nobody; but as they were shewn them by the orange-woman,

' woman, had nick-names for us: How often have
' they laughed out, there goes my landlady; ~~in~~
' come to let lodgings yet?

' *Luc.* Young coxcombs, that knew no better.

' *Weld.* And that we must have come to. For your
' part, what trade could you set up in? You would
' never arrive at the trust and credit of a guinea-bank.
' You would have too much business of your own, ever
' to mind other people's.

' *Luc.* That is true, indeed.

' *Weld.* Then, as a certain sign that there was no
' thing more to be hop'd for, the maids of the choce-
' late-houses found us out, and laugh'd at us: Our
' billet-doux lay there neglected for waste-paper: We
' were cry'd down so low, we could not pass upon the
' city; and became so notorious in our galloping way,
' from one end of the town to the other, that at last we
' could hardly compass a competent change of petti-
' coats to disguise us to the hackney-coachmen: And
' then it was near walking a-foot indeed.

' *Luc.* Nay, that I began to be afraid of.

' *Weld.* To prevent which, with what youth and beauty
were left, some experience, and the small remainder of
fifteen hundred pounds a-piece, which amounted to
bare two hundred between us both, I persuaded you to
bring your person for a venture to the Indies. Every-
thing has succeeded in our voyage; I pass for your
brother: One of the richest planters here, happening
to die just as we landed, I have claimed kindred with
him: So, without making his will, he has left us the
credit of his relation to trade upon: We pass for his
sons, coming home to Surinam, chiefly upon his in-
vitation. We live in reputation, have the best ac-
quaintance in the place, and we shall see our account
in a short time.

' *Luc.* I must rely upon you.

' *Weld.* Enter Widow Lackitt.

' *Wid. Mrs. Weld.* Your servant. Your servant, Mrs.

Luc. I am an invalid, but it is not too late, I hope, to
bid you welcome to this side of the world. [Salutes Lucy.

Weld. Gad so, I beg your pardon, Widow, I should have done the civilities of my house before: But, as you say, 'tis not too late, I hope— [*Going to kiss her.*]

Wid. What! you think now this was a civil way of begging a kiss; and by my troth, if it were, I see no harm in't; 'tis a pitiful favour indeed that is not worth asking for: Tho' I have known a woman speak plainer before now, and not understood neither.

Weld. Not under my roof. Have at you, Widow—

Wid. Why that's well said, spoke like a younger brother, that deserves to have a widow.— [*He kisses her.*]
You're a younger brother, I know by your kissing.

Weld. How so, pray?

Wid. Why, you kiss as if you expected to be paid for't. You have bird-lime upon your-lips. You stick so close, there's no getting rid of you.

Weld. I am a-kin to a younger brother.

Wid. So much the better: We widows are commonly the better for younger brothers.

Luc. Better or worse, most of you. But you won't be much the better for him, I can tell you.— [*Aside.*]

Weld. I was a younger brother; but an-uncle of my mother's has maliciously left me an estate, and, I'm afraid, spoil'd my fortune.

Wid. No, no; an estate will never spoil your fortune; I have a good estate myself, thank Heaven, and a kind husband that left it behind him.

Weld. Thank Heaven that took him away from it, Widow, and left you behind him.

Wid. Nay, Heaven's will must be done; he's in a better place.

Weld. A better place for you, no doubt on't: Now you may look about you; chuse for yourself, Mrs. Lackitt, that's your business; for I know you design to marry again.

Wid. O dear! not I, I protest and swear; I don't design it: But I won't swear neither; one does not know what may happen to tempt one.

Weld. Why a lussy young fellow may happen to tempt you.

Wid.

Wid. Nay, I'll do nothing rashly: I'll resolve against nothing. The devil, they say, is very busy upon these occasions, especially with the widows. But; if I am to be tempted, it must be with a young man, I promise you—*Mrs. Lucy*, your brother is a very pleasant gentleman: I came about business to him, but he turns every thing into merriment.

Weld. Business, *Mrs. Luckitt*? Then I know you would have me to yourself. Pray, leave us together, sister. [Exit Lucy.]

What am I drawing upon myself here? [Aside.]

Wid. You have taken a very pretty house here; every thing so neat about you already. I hear you are laying out for a plantation.

Weld. Why, yes truly, I like the country, and would buy a plantation, if I could reasonably.—

Wid. O! by all means reasonably.

Weld. If I could have one to my mind, I would think of settling among you.

Wid. O! you can't do better. Indeed we can't pretend to have so good company for you as you had in England; but we shall make very much of you. For my own part, I assure you, I shall think myself very happy to be more particularly known to you.

Weld. Dear *Mrs. Luckitt*, you do me too much honour.

Wid. Then as to a plantation, *Mr. Weldon*, you know I have several to dispose of. *Mr. Luckitt*, I thank him, has left, tho' I say it, the richest widow upon the place; therefore I may afford to use you better than other people can. You shall have one upon any reasonable terms.

Weld. That's a fair offer indeed.

Wid. You shall find me as easy as any body you can have to do with, I assure you. Pray try me, I would have you try me, *Mr. Weldon*. Well, I like that name of your's exceedingly, *Mr. Weldon*.

Weld. My name!

Wid. O exceedingly! If any thing could persuade me to alter my own name, I verily believe nothing in the world would do it so soon, as to be called *Mrs. Weldon*.

Weld. Why, indeed *Weldon* doth sound something better than *Lackitt*.

Wid. O! a great deal better. Not that there is so much in the name neither. But, I don't know, there is something; I should like mightily to be called *Mrs. Weldon*.

Weld. I'm glad you like my name.

Wid. Of all things. But then there's the misfortune, one cannot change one's name without changing one's condition.

Weld. You hardly think it worth that, I believe.

Wid. Think it worth what, Sir? changing my condition! indeed, Sir, I think it worth every thing. But alas! Mr. *Weldon*, I have been a widow but six weeks; 'tis too soon to think of changing one's condition yet: indeed it is: pray don't desire it of me: not but that you may persuade me to any thing, sooner than any person in the world.

Weld. Who, I, Mrs. *Lackitt*?

Wid. Indeed you may, Mr. *Weldon*, sooner than any man living. Lord, there's a great deal in faving a decency: I never minded it before: Well, I am glad you spoke first, to excuse my modesty. But, what? modesty means nothing, and is the virtue of a girl, that does not know what she would be at: A widow should be wiser. Now I will own to you, (but I won't confess neither) I have had a great respect for you a great while. I beg you pardon, Sir, and I must declare to you, indeed I must, if you desire to dispose of all I have in the world, in an honourable way, which I don't pretend to be any way deserving your consideration, my fortune and person, if you won't understand me without telling you so, are both at your service, gad! so! another time.

Enter Stanmore.

Stan. So, Mrs. *Lackitt*, you're widowhood's weaning a-pace; I see which way 'tis going. *Weldon*, you're a happy man. The women and their favours come home to you.

Wid. A fiddle of favour, Mr. *Stanmore*. I am a lone woman, you know; I left in a great deal of business, and business must be followed, or lost. I have several stocks

stocks and plantations upon my hands, and other things to dispose of, which Mr *Weldon* may have occasion for.

Weld. We were just upon the brink of a bargain, as you came in.

Stan. Let me drive it in for you.

Weld. So you must, I believe, you or somebody for me.

Stan. I'll stand by you & I understand more of this business than you can pretend to.

Weld. I don't pretend to sit quite out of my way indeed.

Stan. If the widow gets you to herself, she will certainly be too hard for you; I know her of old: She has no conscience in a bargain with a very Jew in a bargain, and would circumvent you to get more of you.

Weld. Is this true, *Widow*?

Wid. Speak as you find, Mr. *Weldon*, I have offer'd you very fair; think upon't, and let me hear of you; the sooner the better, Mr. *Weldon*. [Exit.

Stan. I assure you, my friend, she'll cheat you if she can.

Weld. I don't know that; but I can cheat her, if I will.

Stan. Cheat her! how?

Weld. I can marry her; and then I am sure I have it in my power to cheat her.

Stan. Can you marry her?

Weld. Yes, faith, so she says: Her pretty person and fortune, (which, one with the other, you know are not contemptible) are both at my service.

Stan. Contemptible! very considerable, egad; very desirable; why she's worth ten thousand pounds, man; a clear estate: No charge upon't, but a booby son: He indeed was to have half; but his father begot him, and she breeds him up not to know or have more than she has a mind to. And she has a mind to something else, it seems.

Weld. There's a great deal to be made of this—[Musings.

Stan. A handsome fortune may be made on't; and I advise you to't by all means.

Weld. To marry her! an old wanton witch! I hate her, and I'll not marry for that: Let her go to the devil for you. She'll cheat her son of a good estate for you: that's a perquisite of a widow's portion always.

Weld.

Weld. I have a design, and will follow her at least, till I have a pennyworth of the plantation.

Stan. I speak as a friend, when I advise you to marry her, for 'tis directly against the interest of my own family. My-cousin *Jack* has belabour'd her a good while that way.

Weld. What! honest *Jack*! I'll not hinder him. I'll give over the thoughts of her.

Stan. He'll make nothing on't; she does not care for him. I'm glad you have her in your power.

Weld. I may be able to serve him.

Stan. Here's a ship come into the river; I was in hopes it had been from *England*.

Weld. From *England*!

Stan. No. I was disappointed; I long to see this handsome cousin of your's: The picture you gave me of her has charm'd me.

Weld. You'll see whether it has flatter'd her or no, in a little time. If she recover'd of that illness that was the reason of her staying behind us, I know she will come with the first opportunity. We shall see her, or hear of her death.

Stan. We'll hope the best. The ships from *England* are expected every day.

Weld. What ship is this?

Stan. A rover, a buccaneer, a trader in slaves: That's the commodity we deal in, you know. If you have a curiosity to see our manner of marketing, I'll wait upon you.

Weld. We'll take my sister with us.— [Exit.

S C E N E, *An open Place.*

Enter Lieutenant-Governor and Blandford.

Gov. There's no resisting your fortune, *Blandford*; you draw all the prizes.

Bland. I draw for our lord governor; you know his fortune favours me.

Gov. I grudge him nothing, this time; but if fortune had favour'd me in the last sale, the fair slave had been mine; *Clemene* had been mine.

Bland.

Bland. Are you still in love with her?

Gov. Every day more in love with her?

Enter Capt. Driver, teased and pulled about by Widow Lackitt, and several Planters. Enter, at another Door, Weldon, Lucy, and Stanmore.

Wid. Here have I fix slaves in my lot, and not a man among them; all women and children; what can I do with 'em, Captain? Pray consider I am a woman myself, and can't get my own slaves, as some of my neighbours do.

1st Plant. I have all men in mine: Pray, Captain, let the men and women be mingled together, for procreation sake, and the good of the plantation.

2d Plant. Ay, ay, a man and a woman, Captain, for the good of the plantation.

Capt. Let them mingle together, and be damn'd, what care I? would you have me a pimp for the good of the plantation?

1st Plant. I am a constant customer, Captain.

Wid. I am always ready money to you, Captain.

1st Plant. For that matter, mistress, my money is as ready as yours.

Wid. Pray hear me, Captain.

Capt. Look you, I have done my part by you; I have brought the number of slaves I bargain'd for; if your lots have not pleas'd you, you must draw again among yourselves.

3d Plant. I am contented with my lot.

4th Plant. I am very well satisfied.

3d Plant. We'll have no drawing again.

Capt. Do you hear, mistress? you may hold your tongue; for my part I expect my money.

Wid. Captain, nobody questions or scruples the payment: but I won't hold my tongue; 'tis too much to pray and pay too: One may speak for one's own hope.

Capt. Well, what would you say?

Wid. I say no more than I can make out.

Capt. Out with it then.

Wid. I say things have not been so fair carried as they

they might have been. How do I know but you have juggled together in my absence? You drew the lots before I came, I'm sure.

Capt. That's your own fault, mistress, you might have come sooner.

Wid. Then here's a prince, as they say, among the slaves, and you set him down to go as a common man.

Capt. Have you a mind to try what a man he is? You'll find him no more than a common man, at your business.

Wid. Sir, you're a scurvy fellow to talk at this rate to me. If my husband were alive, gadbodykins you would not use me so.

Capt. Right, mistress, I would not use you at all.

Wid. Not use me! your betters every inch of you. I would have you to know, would be glad to use me, firrah. Marry come up here, who are you I trow? You begin to think yourself a Captain, forsooth, because we call you so. You forget yourself as fast as you can; but I remember you; I know you for a pitiful paltry fellow as you are, an upstart to prosperity; one that is but just come acquainted with cleanliness, and that never saw five shillings of your own without deserv'g to be hang'd for 'em.

Gov. She has given you a broadside, Captain; you'll stand up to her.

Capt. Hang her, 'stink-pot,' I'll come no hearer.

Wid. By this good light it would make a woman do a thing she never designed; marry again, though she were sure to repent it, and be revenged of such a—

J. Stan. What's the matter, Mrs. Lackitt, can I serve you?

Wid. No, no, you can't serve me: You are for serving yourself, I'm sure. Pray go about your business, I have none for you: You know, I have told you so. Lord! how can you be so troublesome, nay, so unconscionable, to think that every rich widow must throw herself away upon a young fellow that has nothing?

Stan. Jack, you are answer'd, I suppose.

J. Stan. I'll have another pluck at her.

Wid.

Wid. Mr. *Weldon*, I am a little out of order; but pray bring your sister to dine with me. Gad's my life, I'm out of all patience with that pious fellow: My flesh rises at him; I can't stay in the place where he is.

[*Exit.*]

Bland. Captain, you have used the widow very familiarly.

Capt. This is my way; I have no design, and therefore am not over civil. If she had ever a handsome daughter to wheedle her out of; or if I could make any thing of her booby son——

Weld. I may improve that hint, and make something of him.

[*Aside.*]

Gov. She's very rich.

Capt. I'm rich myself. She has nothing that I want; I have no leaks to stop. Old women are fortune-menders. I have made a good voyage, and would reap the fruits of my labour. We plow the deep, my masters, but our harvest is on shore. I am for a young woman.

Stan. Look about, Captain, there's one ripe, and ready for the fickle.

Capt. A woman indeed: I will be acquainted with her: Who is she?

Weld. My sister, Sir.

Capt. Would I were a-kin to her: If she were my sister, she should never go out of the family. What say you, mistress? You expect I should marry you, I suppose?

Luc. I shan't be disappointed if you don't.

[*Turning away.*]

Weld. She won't break her heart, Sir.

Capt. But I mean——

[*Following her.*]

Weld. And I mean—— [*Going between him and Lucy*]

That you must not think of her without marrying.

Capt. I mean so too.

Weld. Why then your meaning's out.

Capt. You're very short.

Weld. I shall grow, and be taller for you.

Capt. I shall grow angry, and swear.

Weld. You'll catch no fish then.

Capt.

Capt. I don't well know whether he designs to affront me or no.

Stan. No, no, he's a little familiar; 'tis his way.

Capt. Say you so? nay, I can be as familiar as he, if that be it. Well, Sir, look upon me full. What say you? how do you like me for a brother-in-law?

Weld. Why yes, faith, you'll do my business, [turning him about] if we can agree about my sister's.

Capt. I don't know whether your sister will like me or not: I can't say much to her; but I have money enough: And if you are her brother, as you seem to be a-kin to her, I know that will recommend me to you.

Weld. This is your market for slaves; my sister is a free woman, and must not be disposed of in public. You shall be welcome to my house, if you please: and, upon better acquaintance, if my sister likes you, and I like your offers —

Capt. Very well, Sir, I'll come and see her.

Gov. Where are the slaves, Captain? they are long a-coming.

Bland. And who is this prince that's fall'n to my lot for the lord governor? Let me know something of him, that I may treat him accordingly: Who is he?

Capt. He's the devil of a fellow, I can tell you? a prince every inch of him: You have paid dear enough for him for all the good he'll do you: I was forc'd to clap him in irons, and did not think the ship safe neither. You are in hostility with the *Indians*, they say; they threaten you daily: You had best have an eye upon him.

Bland. But who is he?

Gov. And how do you know him to be a prince?

Capt. He is son and heir to the great king of *Angola*, a mischievous monarch in those parts, who, by his good will, would never let any of his neighbours be in quiet. This son was his general, a plaguy fighting fellow. I have formerly had dealings with him for slaves, which he took prisoners, and have got pretty roundly by him. But the wars being at an end, and nothing more to be got by the trade of that country, I made bold to bring the prince along with me.

Gov.

Gov. How could you do that?

Bland. What! steal a prince out of his own country! impossible!

Capt. 'Twas hard indeed; but I did it. You must know this *Oroonoko*——

Bland. Is that his name?

Capt. Ay, *Oroonoko*.

Gov. *Oroonoko*.

Capt. Is naturally inquisitive about the men and manners of the white nations. B cause I could give him some account of the other parts of the world, I grew very much into his favour: In return of so great an honour, you know, I could do no less, upon my coming away, than invite him on board me. Never having been in a ship, he appointed his time, and I prepared my entertainment. He came the next evening, as private as he could, with about some twenty along with him. The punch went round; and as many of his attendants as would be dangerous, I sent dead drunk on shore; the rest we secured; and so you have the prince *Oroonoko*.

1st Plant. Gad-a-mercy, Captain, there you were with him, i'faith.

2d Plant. Such men as you are fit to be employed in public affairs: The plantation will thrive by you.

3d Plant. Industry ought to be encouraged.

Capt. There's nothing done without it, boys. I have made my fortune this way.

Bland. Unheard of villainy!

Stan. Barbarous treachery!

Bland. They applaud him for't.

Gov. But, Captain, methinks you have taken a great deal of pains for this prince *Oroonoko*; why did you part with him at the common rate of slaves?

Capt. Why, Lieutenant-Governor, I'll tell you, I did design to carry him to *England*, to have show'd him there; but I found him troublesome upon my hands, and I'm glad I'm rid of him——Oh, oh, hark, they come.

Black Slaves, Men, Women, and Children, pass across the Stage by two and two, Aboan, and others of Oroonoko's

noko's Attendants, two and two: Oroonoko last of all in Chains.

Luc. Are a' these wretches slaves?

Sian. All sold, they and their posterity, all slaves.

Luc. O miserable fortune!

Bland. Most of them know no better; they were born so, and only change their masters. But a prince, born only to command, betray'd and sold! my heart drops blood for him.

Capt. Now, Governor, he e he comes, pray observe him.

Oro. So, Sir, you have kept your word with me?

Capt. I am a better Christian, I thank you, than to keep it with a Heathen.

Oro. You are a Christian; be a Christian still;

If you have any God that teaches you

To break your word, I need not curse you more:

Let him cheat you, as you are false to me.

You faithful followers of my better fortune,

We have been fellow-soldiers in the field;

[Embracing his friends.]

Now we are fellow-slaves. This last farewell.

Be sure of one thing that will comfort us,

Whatever world we are next thrown upon

Cannot be worse than this.

[All slaves go off but Oroonoko.]

Capt. You see what a bloody Pagan he is, Governor; but I took care that none of his followers should be in the same lot with him, for fear they should undertake some desperate action, to the danger of the colony.

Oro. Live still in fear; it is the villain's curse,

And will revenge my chains; fear even me,

Who have no power to hurt thee. Nature abhors,

And drives thee out from the society

And commerce of mankind, for breach of faith.

Men live and prosper but in mutual trust,

A confidence of one another's truth:

That thou hast violated. I have done;

I know my fortune, and submit to it.

Gov. Sir, I am sorry for your fortune, and would help it, if I could.

Bland.

Bland. Take off his chains. You know your condition; but you are fallen into honourable hands: You are the Lord Governor's slave, who will use you nobly: In his absence it shall be my care to serve you.

[*Blandford applying to him.*]

Oro. I hear you, but I can believe no more.

Gov. Captain, I'm afraid the world won't speak so honourable of this action of yours, as you would have them.

Capt. I have the money, let the world speak and be damn'd, I care not.

Oro. I would forget myself. Be satisfied [*To Bland.*]
I am above the rank of common slaves.

Let that content you. The Christian there that knows me,
For his own sake will not discover more.

Capt. I have other matters to mind. You have him,
and much good may do you with your prince. [*Exit.*]

The Planters pulling and staring at Oroonoko.

Bland. What would you have there? you stare as if
you never saw a man before. Stand farther off.

[*Turns 'em away.*]

Oro. Let 'em stare on.

I am unfortunate, but not ashamed
Of being so. No, let the guilty blush,
The white man that betray'd me. Honest black
Disdains to change its colour. I am ready:
Where must I go? Dispose me as you please;
I am not well acquainted with my fortune,
But must learn to know it better: So I know, you say,
Degrees make all things easy.

Bland. All things shall be easy.

Oro. Tear off this pomp, and let me know myself:
The slavish habit best becomes me now.
Hard fate, and whips, and chains may overpower
The frailer flesh, and bow my body down:
But there's another, nobler part of me,
Out of your reach, which you can never tame.

Bland. You shall find nothing of this wretchedness
You apprehend. We are not monsters all.
You seem unwilling to disclose yourself:
Therefore, for fear the mentioning your name

Should

Should give you new disquiets, I presume
To call you *Cæsar*.

Oro. I am myself; but call me what you please.

Stan. A very good name *Cæsar*.

Gov. And very fit for his character.

Oro. Was *Cæsar* then a slave?

Gov. I think he was; to pirates too? he was a great conqueror, but unfortunate in his friends——

Oro. His friends were Christians?

Bland. No.

Oro. No! that's strange.

Gov. And murder'd by 'em.

Oro. I would be *Cæsar* then. Yet I will live.

Bland. Live to be happier.

Oro. Do what you will with me.

Bland. I will wait upon you, attend, and serve you.

[*Exit with Oroonoko.*]

Luc. Well, if the Captain had brought this Prince's country along with him, and would make me queen of it, I would not have him, after doing so base a thing.

Weld. He's a man to thrive in the world, sister:
He'll make you the better jointure.

Luc. Hang him, nothing can prosper with him.

Stan. Enquire into the great estates, and you'll find most of them depend upon the same title of honesty: The men who raise 'em first are much of the Captain's principles.

Weld. Ay, ay, as you say, let him be damn'd for the good of his family. Come, sister, we are invited to dinner.

Gov. *Stanmore*, you dine with me. [*Exeunt.*]

A C T II.

S C E N E, Widow Lackitt's House.

Enter Widow Lackitt and Weldon.

Weld. **T**HIS is so great a favour, I don't know how to receive it.

Wid. O dear Sir! you know how to receive, and how to

to return a favour as well as any body, I don't doubt it: 'Tis not the first you have had from our sex, I suppose.

Weld. But this is so unexpected.

Wid. Lord, how can you say so, Mr. *Weldon*? I won't believe you. Don't I know you handsome gentlemen expect every thing a woman can do for you? and by my troth you're in the right on't. I think one can't do too much for a handsome gentleman; and so you shall find it.

Weld. I shall never have such an offer again, that's certain: What shall I do? I am mightily divided—

[*Pretending a concern.*]

Wid. Divided: O dear, I hope not so, Sir: If I marry, truly I expect to have you to myself.

Weld. There's no danger of that, Mrs. *Lackitt*. I am divided in my thoughts: My father upon his deathbed obliged me to see my sister disposed of, before I married myself. 'Tis that sticks upon me. They say, indeed, promises are to be broken or kept; and I know 'tis a foolish thing to be tied to a promise; but I can't help it. I don't know how to get rid of it.

Wid. Is that all?

Weld. All in all to me. The commands of a dying father, you know, ought to be obey'd.

Wid. And so they may.

Weld. Impossible to do me any good.

Wid. They shan't be your hindrance. You wou'd have a husband for your sister, you say: He must be very well to pass too in the world, I suppose.

Weld. I would not throw her away.

Wid. Then marry her out of hand to the sea-captain you were speaking of.

Weld. I was thinking of him, but 'tis to no purpose; she hates him.

Wid. Does she hate him? nay, 'tis no matter, an impudent rascal as he is, I would not advise her to marry him.

Weld. Can you think of nobody else?

Wid. Let me see.

Weld.

Weld. Ay, pray do, I should be loth to part with my good fortune in you for so small a matter as a sister : But you find how it is with me.

Wid. Well-remember'd, i'faith : Well, if I thought you would like of it, I have a husband for her : What do you think of my son ?

Weld. You don't think of it yourself.

Wid. I protest but I do : I am in earnest, if you are, he shall marry her within this half hour, if you'll give your consent to it.

Weld. I give my consent ! I'll answer for my sister, she shall have him : You may be sure I shall be glad to get over the difficulty.

Wid. No more to be said then, that difficulty is over : But I vow and swear you frighten'd me, Mr. *Weldon*. If I had not had a son now for your sister, what must I have done, do you think ? Were not you an ill-natur'd thing to boggle at a promise ? I could break twenty for you.

Weld. I am the more obliged to you ; but this son will save all.

Wid. He's in the house ; I'll go and bring him myself. [*Going.*] You would do well to break the business to your sister. She's within, I'll send her to you—

[*Going again, comes back.*]

Weld. Pray do.

Wid. But d'you hear ? perhaps she may stand upon her maidenly behaviour, and blush, and play the fool, and delay : But don't be answer'd so : What ! she is not a girl at these years : Shew your authority, and tell her roundly, she must be married immediately. I'll manage my son, I warrant you——

[*Gets out in haste.*]

Weld. The widow's in haste, I see : I thought I had laid a rub in the road, about my sister : But she has stepp'd over that. She's making way for herself as fast as she can ; but little thinks where she is going : I could tell her she is going to play the fool : But people don't love to hear of their faults : Besides, that is not my business at present.

Enter Lucy.

So, sister, I have a husband for you——

Luc.

Luc. With all my heart. I don't know what confinement-marriage may be to the men, but I'm sure the women have no liberty without it. I'm for any thing that will deliver me from the care of a reputation, which I begin to find impossible to preserve.

Widd. I'll ease you of that care: You must be married immediately.

Luc. The sooner the better; for I am quite tir'd of setting up for a husband. The widow's foolish son is the man, I suppose.

Widd. I consider'd your constitution, sister; and, finding you would have occasion for a fool, I have provided accordingly.

Luc. I don't know what occasion I may have for a fool when I'm married; but I find none but fools have occasion to marry.

Widd. Since he is to be a fool then, I thought it better for you to have one of his mother's making than your own; 'twill save you the trouble.

Luc. I thank you; you take a great deal of pains for me; but pray tell me what you are doing for yourself all this while?

Widd. You are never true to your own secrets, and therefore I won't trust you with mine. Only remember this, I am your oldest sister, and, consequently, laying my breeches aside, have as much occasion for a husband as you can have. I have a man in my eye, be satisfy'd.

Enter Widow Lackitt, with her son Daniel.

Widd. Come *Daniel*, hold up thy head; child; look like a man: You must not take it as you have done; Gad's my life! there's nothing to be done with twirling your hat, man.

Dan. Why mother, what's to be done then?

Widd. Why, look me in the face, and mind what I say to you.

Dan. Marry, who's the fool then? What shall I get by minding what you say to me?

Widd. Mrs. *Lucy*, the boy is bashful, don't discourage him; pray come a little forward, and let him salute you.

[*Going between Lucy and Daniel.*

Luc.

Luc. A fine husband I am to have truly. [*To Weldon.*

Wid. Come *Daniel*, you must be acquainted with this gentlewoman.

Dan. Nay I'm not proud, that is not my fault: I am presently acquainted when I know the company; but this gentlewoman is a stranger to me.

Wid. She is your mistress, I have spoke a good word for you; make her a bow, and go and kiss her.

Dan. Kiss her! have a care what you say; I warrant she scorns your words. Such fine folks are not us'd to be flopp'd and kiss'd. Do you think I don't know that, mother!

Wid. Try her, try her man: [*Daniel bows, she thrusts him forward*] Why that's well done; go nearer her.

Dan. Is the devil in the woman? Why so I can go nearer her, if you would let a body alone. [*To his Mother.*] Cry your mercy, forsooth; my mother is always shaming one before company; she would have me as unmannerly as herself, and offer to kiss you. [*To Lucy.*

Weld. Why won't you kiss her?

Dan. Why, pray may I.

Weld. Kiss her, kiss her man.

Dan. Marry, and I will; [*Kisses her.*] gadsooks, she kisses rarely: An' please you, mistress, and seeing my mother will have it so, I don't much care if I kiss you again, forsooth. [*Kisses her again.*

Luc. Well, how do you like me now?

Dan. Like you? marry I don't know, you have bewitched me, I think: I was never so in my born days before.

Wid. You must marry this fine woman, *Daniel*.

Dan. Hey day! marry her! I was never married in all my life. What must I do with her then, mother?

Wid. You must live with her, eat and drink with her, go to bed with her, and sleep with her.

Dan. Nay, marry, if I must go to bed with her, I shall never sleep, that's certain; she'll break me of my rest, quite and clean, I tell you before hand. As for eating and drinking with her, why I have a good stomach, and can play my part in any company. But how do you think I can go to bed to a woman I don't know?

Weld.

Weld. You shall know her better.

Dan. Say you so, Sir?

Weld. Kifs her again.

[*Daniel kisses Lucy.*]

Dan. Nay, kissing I find will make us presently acquainted. We'll steal into a corner to practice a little, and then I shall be able to do any thing.

Weld. The young man mends apace.

Wid. Pray don't baulk him.

Dan. Mother, mother, if you'll stay in the room by me, and promise not to leave me, I don't care for once if I venture to go to bed with her.

Wid. There's a good child, go in and put on thy best cloaths; pluck up a spirit, I'll stay in the room by thee. She won't hurt thee, I warrant thee.

Dan. Nay, as to that matter, I am not afraid of her: I'll give her as good as she brings. I have a *Rowland* for her *Oliver*, and so thou may tell her. [Exit.

Wid. Mrs. *Lucia*, we shan't stay for you: You are in readiness I suppose.

Weld. She is always ready to do what I would have her, I must say that for my sister.

Wid. 'Twill be her own another day, Mr. *Weldons*, we'll marry 'em out of hand, and then——

Weld. And then, Mrs. *Lackitt*, look to yourself——
[*Exeunt.*]

Enter Oroonoko and Blandford.

* *Oro.* You grant I have good reason to suspect

* All the professions you can make to me.

* *Bland.* Indeed you have.

* *Oro.* The dog that sold me did profess as much

* As you can do—but yet, I know not why—

* Whether it is because I'm fall'n so low,

* And have no more to fear—that is not it:

* I am a slave no longer than I please.

* 'Tis something nobler—being just myself,

* I am inclining to think others so:

* 'Tis that prevails upon me to believe you:

* *Bland.* You may believe me.

* *Oro.* I do believe you.

B

* From

' From what I know of you, you are no fool :
 ' Fools only are the knaves, and live by tricks :
 ' Wise men may thrive without 'em, and be honest.
Bland. They won't all take your counsel. [*Affide.*]

Oro. ' You know my story, and' you say you are
 A friend to my misfortunes : That's a name
 Will teach you what you owe yourself and me.

Bland. I'll study to deserve to be your friend.
 When once our noble governor arrives,
 With him you will not need my interest :
 He is too generous not to feel your wrongs.
 But be assur'd I will employ my pow'r,
 And find the means to send you home again.

Oro. I thank you, Sir.—My honest, wretched friends !
 [*Sighing.*]

Their chains are heavy : They have hardly found
 So kind a master. May I ask you, Sir,
 What is become of them : Perhaps I should not.
 You will forgive a stranger.

Bland. I'll enquire.
 And use my best endeavours, where they are,
 To have 'em gently us'd.

Oro. Once more I thank you.
 You offer every cordial that can keep
 My hopes alive, to wait a better day.
 What friendly care can do, you have apply'd :
 But oh ! I have a grief admits no cure.

Bland. You do not know, Sir——

Oro. Can you raise the dead ?
 Pursue and overtake the wings of Time ?
 And bring about again the hours, the days,
 The years that made me happy ?

Bland. That is not to be done.

Oro. No, there is nothing to be done for me.

[*Kneeling, and kissing the earth.*]
 Thou God ador'd ! thou ever-glorious sun !
 If she be yet on earth, send me a beam
 Of thy all-seeing pow'r to light me to her :
 Or, if thy sister goddess has preferr'd
 Her beauty to the skies, to be a star ;

O tell

O tell me where she shines, that I may stand
Whole nights, and gaze upon her.

Bland. I am rude, and interrupt you.

Oro. I am troublesome :

But pray give me your pardon. My swoll'n heart
Burst out its passage, and I must complain.

O! can you think of nothing dearer to me?
Dearer than liberty, my country, friends,
Much dearer than my life, that I have lost
The tenderest best lov'd, and loving wife.

Bland. Alas! I pity you.

Oro. Do pity me :

Pity's a-kin to love; and every thought
Of that soft kind is welcome to my soul.
I would be pity'd here.

Bland. I dare not ask

More than you please to tell me : But, if you
Think it convenient to let me know
Your story, I dare promise you to bear
A part in your distress, if not assist you.

Oro. Thou honest-hearted man! I wanted such,
Just such a friend as thou art, that would sit
Still as the night, and let me talk whole days
Of my *Imoinda*. O! I'll tell thee all
From first to last; and pray observe me well.

Bland. I will most heedfully.

Oro. There was a stranger in my father's court,
Valu'd and honour'd much : He was a white,
The first I ever saw of your complexion.
He chang'd his God for ours, and so grew great;
Of many virtues, and so fam'd in arms,
He still commanded all my father's wars.
I was bred under him. One fatal day,
The armies joining, he before me stepp'd.
Receiving in his breast a poison'd dart
Level'd at me; he dy'd within my arms.
I've tir'd you already.

Bland. Pray go on.

Oro. He left an only daughter, whom he brought
An infant to *Angola*. When I came

Back to the Court, a happy conqueror,
 Humanity oblig'd me to condole
 With this sad virgin for a father's loss,
 Lost for my safety. I presented her
 With all the slaves of battle, to atone
 Her father's ghost. But, when I saw her face,
 And heard her speak, I offer'd up myself
 To be the sacrifice. She bow'd and blush'd:
 I wonder'd and ador'd. The sacred pow'r,
 That had subdu'd me, then inspir'd my tongue,
 Inclined her heart, and all our talk was love.

Bland. Then you were happy.

Oro. O! I was too happy.

I marry'd her: And, though my country's custom
 Indulg'd the privilege of many wives,
 I swore myself never to know but her.
 She grew with child; and I grew happier still.
 O my *Imoinda*! But it could not last.
 Her fatal beauty reach'd my father's ears:
 He sent for her to court, where, cursed court!
 No woman comes but for his amorous use.
 He raging to possess her, she was forc'd
 To own herself my wife. The furious king
 Started at incest; but, grown desperate,
 Not daring to enjoy what he desir'd,
 In mad revenge, (which I could never learn)
 He poison'd her, or sent her far, far off,
 Far from my hopes ever to see her more.

Bland. Most barbarous of fathers! the sad tale
 Has struck me dumb with wonder.

Oro. I have done.

I'll trouble you no farther: Now and then

A sigh will have its way: That shall be all.

Stan. *Blandford*, the Lieutenant Governor is gone
 to your plantation, while desires you would bring the
 Royal Slave with you. The sight of his fair mistress,
 he says, is an entertainment for a Prince, he would
 have his opinion of her.

Oro. Is he a lover!

Bland.

Bland. So he says himself: He flatters a beautiful slave that I have, and calls her mistress.

Oro. Must he then flatter her to call her mistress? I pity the proud man, who thinks himself Above being in love: What, tho' she be a slave, She may deserve him.

Bland. You shall judge of that when you see her, Sir.

Oro. I go with you. [*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E, a Plantation.

Lient. Governor following Imoinda.

Gov. I have disturb'd you, I confess my faults,
My fair *Clemens*; ' but begin again,
' And I will listen to your mournful song,
' Sweet as the soft complaining nightingale's.
' While every note calls out my trembling soul,
' And leaves me silent, as the midnight groves,
' Only to shelter you; ' sing, sing again,
And let me wonder at the many ways
You have to ravish me.

Imo. O I can weep
Enough for you and me, if that will please you.

Gov. You must not weep: I come to dry your tears,
And raise you from your sorrow. Look upon me:
' Look with the eyes of kind indulging love,
' That I may have full cause for what I say:
I came to offer you your liberty,
And be myself the slave. You turn away: [*Following her.*
But every thing become you. I may take
This pretty hand: I know your modesty
Would draw it back: But you would take it ill
If I should let it go, I know ye wou'd.
You shall be gently forc'd to please yourself;
That you will thank me for.

[*She struggles, and gets her hand from him, then she offers to kiss her.*

Nay, if you struggle with me, I must take—

Imo. You may my life, that I can part with freely.

[*Exit.*
Enter

Enter Blandford, Stanmore, and Oroonoko.

Bland. So, Governor, we don't disturb you, I hope :
Your mistress has left you : You were making love :
She's thankful for the honour, I suppose.

Gov. Quite insensible to all I say, and do :
When I speak to her, she sighs, or weeps,
But never answers me as I would have her.

Stan. There's something nearer than her slavery, that
touches her.

Bland. What do her fellow slaves say of her? can't
they find the cause?

Gov. Some of them, who pretend to be wiser than
the rest, and hate her, I suppose for being us'd better
than they are, will needs have it that she is with child.

Bland. Poor wretch ! if it be so, I pity her :
She has lost a husband, that perhaps was dear
To her, and then you cannot blame her.

Oro. If it be so, indeed you cannot blame her.

[Sighing.]

Gov. No, no, it is not so : If it be so,
I must still love her : And, desiring still,
I must enjoy her.

Bland. Try what you can do with fair means, and
welcome.

Gov. I'll give you ten slaves for her.

Bland. You know she is our Lord Governor's : But,
if I could dispose of her, I would not now, especially
to you.

Gov. Why not to me?

Bland. I mean against her will. You are in love
with her;

And we all know what your desires would have ;
Love stops at nothing but possession.

'Were she within your pow'r, you do not know

'How soon you would be tempted to forget

'The nature of the deed, and, may be, act

'A violence, you after would repent.'

Oro. 'Tis godlike in you to protect the weak.

Gov. Fie, fie, I would not force her. Tho' she be
A slave, her mind is free, and should consent.

Oro.

Oro. Such honour will engage her to consent :
And then, if you're in love, she's worth the having.
Shall we not see the wonder ?

Gov. Have a care ;
You have a heart, and she has conqu'ring eyes.

Oro. I have a heart ; but, if it could be false
To my first vows, ever to love again,
These honest hands should tear it from my breast,
And throw the traitor from me. *O ! Imoinda !*
Living or dead, I can be only thine.

Bland. *Imoinda* was his wife : She's either dead,
Or living, dead to him ; forc'd from his arms
By an inhuman father. Another time
I'll tell you all. [*To the Gov. and Stan.*

Stan. Hark ! the slaves have done their work ;
And now begins their evening merriment.

Bland. The men are all in love with fair *Clemens*
As much as you are : And the women hate her,
From an instinct of natural jealousy.
They sing, and dance, and try their little tricks
To entertain her, and divert her sadness.
May be she is among them : Shall we see ? [*Exeunt.*

*The SCENE drawn shows the Slaves, Men, Women,
and Children, upon the Ground ; some rise and dance.*

‘ A S O N G by a B O Y..

‘ *A* Lass there lives upon the green,
‘ Could-I her picture draw ;
‘ A brighter nymph was never seen,
‘ That looks, and reigns a little queen,
‘ And keeps the swains in awe.

II.

‘ Her eyes are Cupid's darts and wings,
‘ Her eye-brows are his bow :
‘ Her silken hair the silver strings,
‘ Which sure and swift destruction brings
‘ To all the world below.

III.

- If Pastorella's dawning light
- Can warm and wound us so ;
- Her noon will shine so piercing bright,
- Each glancing beam will kill outright,
- And every swain subdue,

A SONG by a MAN.

- Bright Cynthia's power divinely great,
- What heart is not obeying ?
- A thousand Cupids on her wait,
- And in her eyes are playing.

II.

- She seems the queen of love to reign,
- For she alone dispenses
- Such sweets, as best can entertain,
- The gust of all the senses.

III.

- Her face a charming prospect brings ;
- Her breath gives balmy bliss ;
- I hear an angel when she sings,
- And taste of Heav'n in kisses.

IV.

- Four senses thus she feasts with joy,
- From Nature's richest treasure ;
- Let me the other sense employ,
- And I shall die with pleasure.

During the Entertainment, the Governor, Blandford, Stanmore, Orbonoko, enter as Spectators ; that ended, Captain Driver, Jack Stanmore, and several Planters, enter with their swords drawn. Drum beats.
A bell rings.

Capt. Where are you, Governor ? Make what haste you can
 To save yourself and the whole colony.
 I bid 'em ring the bell.

Gov.

Gov. What's the matter?

J. Stan. The *Indians* are come down upon us; they have plundered some of the plantations already, and are marching this way as fast as they can.

Gov. What can we do against them?

Bland. We shall be able to make a stand, till more planters come into us.

J. Stan. There are a great many more without, if you would shew yourself, and put us in order.

Gov. There's no danger of the white slaves, they'll not stir. Blandford and Stanmore, come you along with me. Some of you stay here to look after the black slaves.

[All go out but the Captain and six Planters, who all at once seize Oroonoko.]

1st Plant. Ay, ay, let us alone.

Capt. In the first place, we secure you, Sir, As an enemy to the government.

Oro. Are you there, Sir? you are my constant friend.

1st Plant. You will be able to do a great deal of mischief.

Capt. But we shall prevent you: Bring the irons hither. He has the malice of a slave in him, and would be glad to be cutting his masters throats. I know him. Chain his hands and feet; that he may not run over to 'em. If they have him, they'll carry him on their backs, that I can tell 'em.

[As they are chaining him, Blandford enters, runs to 'em.]

Bland. What are you doing there?

Capt. Securing the main chance: This is a bosom enemy.

Bland. Away, you brutes: I'll answer with my life for his behaviour; so tell the Governor.

Capt. and Plant. Well, Sir, so we will.

[Exeunt Captain and Planters.]

Oro. Give me a sword, and I'll deserve your trust.

[A party of Indians enter, hurrying Imoinda among the slaves; another party of Indians sustains 'em retreating, followed at a distance by the Governor with the Planters: Blandford, Oroonoko, join 'em.]

Bland. Hell and the devil! they drive away our slaves before

before our faces. Governor, can you stand tamely by, and suffer this? *Clemene*, Sir, your mistress, is among 'em.

Gov. We throw ourselves away, in the attempt to rescue 'em.

Oro. A lover cannot fall more glorious,
Than in the cause of love. He that deserves
His mistress's favour, wo'not stay behind:
I'll lead you on, be bold, and follow me.

[*Oroonoko, at the head of the Planters, falls upon the Indians with a great shout, and beats 'em off.*

Enter Imoinda.

Imo. I'm tost about by my tempestuous fates,
And no-where must have rest: *Indians, or English!*
Whoever has me, I am still a slave.

No matter whose I am, since I'm no more.

My royal master's; since I'm his no more.

O I was happy! nay, I will be happy,

In the dear thought that I am still his wife,

Tho' far divided from him.

[*Draws off to a corner of the stage.*

Enter the Governor, with Oroonoko, Blandford, Stanmore, and the Planters.

Gov. Thou glorious man! thou something greater sure
Than *Cæsar* ever was! that single arm
Has sav'd us all: Accept our general thanks.

[*All bow to Oroonoko.*

And what can we do more to recompense

Such noble services, you shall command.

Clemene too shall thank you——she is safe——

Look up, and bless your brave deliverer.

[*Brings Clemene forward, looking down on the ground.*

Oro. Bless me indeed!

Bland. You start!

Oro. O all you gods,

Who govern this great world, and bring about

Things strange and unexpected! can it be?

Gov. What is't you stare at so?

Oro. Answer me some of you, you who have pow'r,
And have your senses free: Or are you all

Struck thro' with wonder too? [*Looking still fix'd as ber.*

Bland.

Bland. What would you know ?

Oro. My soul steals from my body thro' my eyes ;
All that is left of life I'll gaze away,
And die upon the pleasure.

Gov. This is strange !

Oro. If you but mock me with her image here :
If she be not *Imoinda*——

[*She looks upon him, and falls into a swoon ; he runs to her.*
Ha ! She faints !

Nay, then it must be she : It is *Imoinda* :

My heart confesses her, and leaps for joy,

To welcome her to her own empire here.

' I feel her all, in ev'ry part of me.

' O ! let me press her in my eager arms,

' Wake her to life, and with this kindling kiss

' Give back that soul, she only lent to me. [*Kisses her.*

' *Gov.* I am amaz'd !

' *Bland.* I am as much as you.'

Oro. *Imoinda* ! Oh ! thy *Oroonoko* calls.

[*Imoinda coming to life.*

Imo. My *Oroonoko* ! Oh ! I can't believe

What any man can say. But, if I am

To be deceiv'd, there's something in that name,

That voice, that face—— [*Staring on him.*

O ! if I know myself, I cannot be mistaken.

[*Runs and embraces Oroonoko.*

Oro. Never here :

You cannot be mistaken : I am your's,

Your *Oroonoko*, all that you would have,

Your tender loving husband.

Imo. All indeed

That I would have : My husband ! then I am

Alive, and waking to the joys I feel :

They were so great, I could not think 'em true ;

But I believe all that you say to me :

For truth itself, and everlasting love

Grows in this breast, and pleasure in these arms.

Oro. Take, take me all : Enquire into my heart,

(You know the way to ev'ry secret there)

My heart, the sacred treasury of love :

And if, in absence, I have misemploy'd
A mite from the rich store; if I have spent
A wish, a sigh, but what I sent to you;
May I be curs'd to wish, and sigh in vain,
And you not pity me.

Imo. O! I believe;
And know you by myself. If these sad eyes,
Since last we parted, have beheld the face
Of any comfort, or once wish'd to see
The light of any other heav'n but you,
May I be struck this moment blind, and lose
Your blessed sight, never to find you more.

Oro. *Imoinda!* O! this separation
Has made you dearer, if it can be so,
Than you ever were to me. You appear
Like a kind star to my benighted steps,
To guide me on my way to happiness:
I cannot miss it now. Governor, friend,
You think me mad: But let me bless you all,
Who, any ways, have been the instruments
Of finding her again. *Imoinda's* found!
And every thing that I would have in her.

[Embracing her in the most passionate fondness.]

Stan. Where's your mistress now, Governor?

Gov. Why, where most men's mistresses are forced
to be sometimes,

With her husband, it seems: But I won't lose her so.
[Aside.]

Stan. He has fought lustily for her, and deserves
I'll say that for him. *[her.]*

Bland. Sir, we congratulate your happiness: I do
most heartily.

Gov. And all of us; but how it comes to pass —

Oro. That will require

• More precious time than I can spare you now.

• I have a thousand things to ask of her,

• And she as many more to know of me.

• But you have made me happier, I confess,

• Acknowledge it, much happier than I

• Have words or pow'r to tell you. Captain, you,
• *Ev'n*

- Ev'n you, who most have wrong'd me, I forgive.
- I wo't not say you have betray'd me now :
- I'll think you but the minister of fate,
- To bring me to my lov'd *Imoinda* here.'

Imo. How, how, shall I receive you ; how be worthy
Of such endearments, all this tenderness ?
These are the transports of prosperity,
When Fortune smiles upon us.

Oro. Let the fools
Who follow Fortune live upon her smiles ;
All our prosperity is plac'd in love,
We have enough of that to make us happy.
This little spot of earth you stand upon,
Is more to me than the extended plains
Of my great father's kingdom. Here I reign
In full delights, in joys to pow'r unknown :
Your love my empire, and your heart my throne.

[*Exeunt.*

A C T III.

Enter Abean, with several Slaves, and Hotman.

Hot. **W**HAT ! to be slaves to cowards ! Slaves to
rogues ! who can't defend themselves !

Abe. Who is this fellow ? He talks as if he were ac-
quainted with our design : Is he one of us ?

[*Afide to his own gang.*

Slav. Not yet ; but he will be glad to make one, I
believe.

Abe. He makes a mighty noise.

Hot. Go, sneak in corners, whisper out your griefs,
For fear your masters hear you : Cringe and crouch
Under the bloody whip, like beaten curs,
That lick their wounds, and know no other cure,
All, wretches all ! you feel their cruelty,
As much as I can feel, but dare not groan.
For my part, while I have a life and tongue,
I'll curse the authors of my slavery.

Abe.

Abo. Have you been long a slave?

Hot. Yes, many years.

Abo. And do you only curse?

Hot. Curse! only curse! I cannot conjure,
To raise the spirits up of other men:
I am but one. O! for a soul of fire,
To warm and animate our common cause;
And make a body of us; then I would
Do something more than curse.

Abo. That body set on foot, you would be one,
A limb, to lend it motion?

Hot. I would be
The heart of it; the head, the hand, and heart:
Would I could see the day.

Abo. You will do all yourself.

Hot. I would do more
Than I shall speak, but I may find a time——

Abo. The time may come to you; be ready for't.
Methinks he talks too much; I'll know him more
Before I trust him farther. [*Aside.*

Slav. If he dares
Half what he says, he'll be of use to us.

Enter Blandford.

Bland. If there be any one among you here
That did belong to *Oroonoko*, speak,
I come to him.

Abo. I did belong to him; *Aboan* my name.

Bland. You are the man I want; pray come with me.
[*Exeunt.*

Enter Oroonoko and Imoinda.

Oro. I do not blame my father for his love:
(Tho' that had been enough to ruin me.)
'Twas Nature's fault that made you, like the sun,
'The reasonable worship of mankind:
'He could not help his adoration.
'Age had not lock'd his senses up so close,
'But he had eyes, that open'd to his soul,
'And took your beauties in: He felt your pow'r,
'And therefore I forgive his loving you:
But, when I think on his barbarity,

That.

That could expose you to so many wrongs;
 Driving you out to wretched slavery,
 Only for being mine; then I confess
 I wish I could forget the name of son,
 That I might curse the tyrant.

Imo. I will bless him,
 For I have found you here: Heav'n only knows
 What is reserv'd for us: But, if we guess
 The future by the past, our fortune must
 Be wonderful, above the common size
 Of good or ill; it must be in extremes:
 Extremely happy, or extremely wretched.

Oro. 'Tis in our pow'r to make it happy now.

Imo. But not to keep it so.

Enter Blandford and Aboan.

Bland. My royal lord!
 I have a present for you.

Oro. Aboan!

Abo. Your lowest slave.

Oro. My try'd and valued friend!

This worthy man always prevents my wants:
 I only wish'd, and he has brought thee to me.
 Thou art surpriz'd: Carry thy duty there;

[Aboan goes to Imoinda, and falls at her feet.]

While I acknowledge mine, how shall I thank you?

Bland. Believe me honest to your interest,
 And I am more than paid. I have secur'd
 That all your followers shall be gently us'd.
 Shall wait upon your person, while you stay
 Among us.

Oro. I owe every thing to you.

Bland. You must not think you are in slavery.

Oro. I do not find I am.

Bland. Kind Heav'n has miraculously sent
 Those comforts, that may teach you to expect
 Its farther care, in your deliverance.

Oro. I sometimes think, myself, Heav'n is con-
 cern'd
 For my deliverance.

Bland.

Bland. It will be soon ;
 You may expect it. Pray, in the mean time,
 Appear as chearful as you can among us.
 You have some enemies, that represent
 You dangerous, and would be glad to find
 A reason, in your discontent, to fear :
 They watch your looks. But there are honest men,
 Who are your friends : You are secur'd in them.

Oro. I thank you for your caution.

Bland. I will leave you :
 And be assur'd, I wish your liberty.

[*Exit.*

Abo. He speaks you very fair.

Oro. He means me fair.

Abo. If he should not, my lord ?

Oro. If he should not ?

I'll not suspect his truth : But, if I did,
 What shall I get by doubting ?

Abo. You secure
 Not to be disappointed : But, besides,
 There's this advantage in suspecting him :
 When you put off the hopes of other men,
 You will rely upon your god-like self ;
 And then you may be sure of liberty.

Oro. Be sure of liberty ! what dost thou mean ;
 Advising to rely upon myself ?

I think I may be sure on't : We must wait :

'Tis worth a little patience. [Turning to Imoinda.

Abo. O my lord !

Oro. What dost thou drive at ?

Abo. Sir, another time
 You would have found it sooner : But I see
 Love has your heart, and takes up all your thoughts.

Oro. And canst thou blame me ?

Abo. Sir, I must not blame you.

But, as our fortune stands, there is a passion
 (Your pardon, royal mistress, I must speak)
 That would become you better than your love :
 A brave resentment ; which, inspir'd by you,
 Might kindle and diffuse a gen'rous rage
 Among the slaves, to rouse and shake our chains.

And

And struggle to be free.

Oro. How can we help ourselves?

Abo. I knew you when you would have found a way.
How help ourselves! the very *Indians* teach us:

We need but to attempt our liberty,
And we carry it. We have hands sufficient,
Double the number of our master's force,
Ready to be employ'd. 'What hinders us
'To set 'em at work?' We want but you,
To head our enterprize, and bid us strike.

Oro. What would you do?

Abo. Cut our oppressors' throats.

Oro. And you would have me join in your design of
murder?

Abo. It deserves a better name:
But, be it what it will, 'tis justify'd
By self-defence, and natural liberty.

Oro. I'll hear no more on't.

Abo. I'm sorry for't.

Oro. Nor shall you think of it!

Abo. Not think of it!

Oro. No, I command you not.

Abo. Remember, Sir,

You are a slave yourself, and to command
Is now another's right. Not think of it!
Since the first moment they put on my chains,
I've thought of nothing but the weight of 'em,
And how to throw 'em off: Can your's fit easy?

Oro. I have a sense of my condition,
As painful, and as quick, as your's can be.
I feel for my *Imoinda* and myself;
Imoinda! much the tenderest part of me.
But tho' I languish for my liberty,
I would not buy it at the Christian price
Of black ingratitude: They sha'not say,
That we deserv'd our fortune by our crimes.
'Murder the innocent!

Abo. The innocent!

Oro. These men are so, whom you would rise against;
If we are slaves, they did not make us slaves.

But

But bought us in an honest way of trade :
 As we have done before 'em, bought and sold
 Many a wretch, and never thought it wrong.
 ' They paid our price for us, and we are now
 ' Their property, a part of their estate,
 ' To manage as they please. Mistake me not,
 I do not tamely say, that we should bear
 All they could lay upon us : But we find
 The load so light, so little to be felt,
 (Considering they have us in their pow'r,
 And may inflict what grievances they please)
 We ought not to complain.

Abu. My royal lord !

You do not know the heavy grievances,
 The toils, the labours, weary drudgeries,
 Which they impose ; burdens more fit for beasts,
 For senseless beasts to bear, than thinking men.
 Then if you saw the bloody cruelties
 They execute on every slight offence ;
 Nay, sometimes in their proud, insulting sport,
 How worse than dogs they lash their fellow-creatures ;
 Your heart would bleed for 'em. Oh ! could you know
 How many wretches lift their hands and eyes
 To you for their relief !

Oro. I pity 'em,
 And wish I could with honesty do more.

Abu. You must do more, and may, with honesty.
 O royal Sir, remember who you are,
 A prince, born for the good of other men :
 Whose god-like office is to draw the sword
 Against oppression, and set free mankind :
 And this I'm sure you think oppression now.
 What tho' you have not felt these miseries,
 Never believe you are oblig'd to them :
 They have their selfish reasons, may be, now,
 For using of you well : But there will come
 A time, when you must have your share of 'em.

Oro. You see how little cause I have to think so :
 Favour'd in my own person, in my friends ;
 Indulg'd in all that can concern my care,

In my *Imaïnda's* soft society. [Embracing her.]

Abo. And, therefore, would you lie contented down
In the forgetfulness, and arms of love,
To get young princes for 'em?

Oro. Say'st thou! ha!

Abo. Princes, the heirs of empire, and the last
Of your illustrious lineage, to be born
To pamper up their pride, and be their slaves?

Oro. *Imoïnda!* save me, save me from that thought.

Imo. There is no safety from it: I have long
Suffer'd it with a mother's labouring pains;
And can no longer. Kill me, kill me now,
While I am blest'd, and happy in your love;
Rather than let me live to see you hate me:
As you must hate me; me, the only cause,
The fountain of these flowing miseries:
Dry up the spring of life, this pois'nous spring,
That swells so fast, to overwhelm us all.

Oro. Shall the dear babe, the eldest of my hopes,
Whom I begot a prince, be born a slave?
The treasure of this temple was design'd
T' enrich a kingdom's fortune: Shall it here
Be seiz'd upon by vile unhallow'd hands,
To be employ'd in uses most profane?

Abo. In most unworthy uses; think of that;
And, while you may, prevent it. 'O my lord,
Rely on nothing that they say to you.
They speak you fair, I know, and bid you wait:
But think what 'tis to wait on promises,
And promises of men who know no tie
Upon their words, against their interest:
And where's their interest in freeing you?

Imo. O! where indeed, to lose so many slaves?

Abo. Nay, grant this man, you think so much
your friend,

Be honest, and intends all that he says;
He is but one; and in a government,
Where, he confesses, you have enemies,
That watch your looks. What looks can you put on,
To please these men, who are before resolv'd
To read 'em their own way? Alas! my lord,

‘ If

• If they incline to think you dangerous,
 • They have their knavish arts to make you so:
 • And then who knows how far their crubility
 • May carry their revenge! — *Imo.* To every thing
 • That does belong to you, your friends, and me;
 • I shall be torn from you, forced away,
 • Helpless and miserable: Shall I live
 • To see that day again?
 • *Oro.* That day shall never come.

Abd. I know you are persuaded to believe.
 The governor's arrival will prevent.
 These mischiefs, and bestow your liberty:
 But who is sure of that? I rather fear
 More mischiefs from his coming. He is young,
 Luxurious, passionate, and amorous:
 Such a complexion, and made bold by pow'r,
 To countenance all he is prone to do,
 Will know no bounds, no law against his lusts.
 If, in a fit of his intemperance,
 With a strong hand he shall resolve to seize,
 And force my royal mistress from your arms,
 How can you help yourself?
Oro. Ha! thou hast rous'd
 The lion in his den, he stalks abroad,
 And the wide forest trembles at his roar.
 I find the danger now. My spirits start
 At the alarm, and from all quarters come
 To man my heart, the citadel of love.
 Is there a pow'r on earth to force you from me?
 And shall I not resist it? nor strike first?
 • To keep, to save you, to prevent that curse?
 • 'This is your cause, and shall it not prevail?'
 Oh! you were born always to conquer me.
 Now I am fashion'd to thy purpose: Speak,
 What combination, what conspiracy,
 Would'st thou engage me in? I'll undertake
 All thou would'st have me now for liberty,
 For the great cause of love and liberty.

Abd. Now, my great master, you appear yourself.
 And,

And, since we have you join'd in our design,
It cannot fail us. I have muster'd up
The choicest slaves, men who are sensible
Of their condition, and seem most resolv'd:
They have their several parties.

Oro. Summon 'em,
Assemble 'em: I will come forth and shew
Myself among 'em: If they are resolv'd,
I'll lead their foremost resolutions.

Abo. I have provided those will follow you.

Oro. With this reserve in our proceedings still,
The means that lead us to our liberty
Must not be bloody.

Abo. You command in all.

We shall expect you, Sir:

Oro. You sha'not long.

[*Exit Oro. and Imo. at one door, Aboan at another.*
Weldon coming in before Mrs. Lackitt.

Wid. These unmannerly *Indians* were something unreasonable to disturb us just in the nick, Mr *Weldon*; but I have the Parson within call still, to do us the good turn.

Weld. We had best stay a little I think, to see things settled again, had not we? Marriage is a serious thing you know.

Wid. What do you talk of a serious thing, Mr. *Weldon*? I think you have found me sufficiently serious: I have married my son to your sister, to pleasure you: And now I come to claim your promise to me, you tell me marriage is a serious thing.

Weld. Why, it is not so.

Wid. Fiddle, faddle, I know what it is: 'Tis not the first time I have been marry'd, I hope: But I shall begin to think you don't design to do fairly by me, for I shall.

Weld. Why indeed, Mrs. *Lackitt*, I'm afraid I can't do so fairly as I should by you. 'Tis what you must know first of all, and I should be the worst man in the world to conceal it any longer; therefore I must own to you what I am married already.

Wid. Married? You don't say so, I hope! how have you

you the conscience to tell me such a thing to my face. Have you abus'd me then, fool'd and cheated me? what do you take me for, Mr. *Weldon*? Do you think I am to be serv'd at this rate? But you shan't find me the silly creature you think me: I would have you to know I understand better things than to ruin my son without a valuable consideration. If I can't have you, I can keep my money. Your sister shan't have the catch of him she expected: I won't part with a shilling to 'em.

Weld. You made the match yourself, you know, you can't blame me.

Wid. Yes, yes, I can, and do blame you: you might have told me before, you were marry'd.

Weld. I would not have told you now; but you follow'd me so close, I was forc'd to it: Indeed I am marry'd in *England*; but 'tis as if I were not; for I have been parted from my wife a great while, and, to do reason on both sides, we hate one another heartily. Now I did design, and will marry you still, if you'll have a little patience.

Wid. A likely business truly.

Weld. I have a friend in *England* that I will write to, to poison my wife, and then I can marry you with a good conscience; if you love me, as you say you do, you'll consent to that, I'm sure.

Wid. And will he do it, do you think?

Weld. At the first word, or he is not the man I take him to be.

Wid. Well, you are a dear devil, Mr. *Weldon*: And would you poison your wife for me?

Weld. I would do any thing for you.

Wid. Well, I am mightily oblig'd to you. But 'twill be a great while before you can have an answer of your letter.

Weld. 'Twill be a great while indeed.

Wid. In the mean time, Mr. *Weldon*——

Weld. Why in the mean time——Here's company. We'll settle that within; I'll follow you. [*Exit* *Wid.*]

Enter *Stanmore*.

Stan. So, Sir, you carry on your business swimmingly: You have stolen a wedding I hear.

Weld.

Weld. Ay, my sifter is marry'd : And I am very near being run away with myself.

Stan. The widow will have you then ?

Weld. You come very seasonably to my rescue : *Jack Stanmore* is to be had, I hope ?

Stan. At half an hour's warning.

Weld. I must advise with you. [Exit.]

• SCENE, *The Country.*

• Enter Oroonoko, with Aboan, Hotman, and Slaves.

• *Oro.* Impossible ! nothing's impossible :

• We know our strength only by being try'd.

• If you object the mountains, rivers, woods

• Unpassable, that lie before our march :

• Woods we can set on fire : We swim by nature :

• What can oppose us then but we may tame ?

• All things submit to virtuous industry :

• That we carry with us, that is ours.

• *Slav.* Great Sir, we have attended all you said,

• With silent joy and admiration :

• And, were we only men, would follow such,

• So great a leader, thro' the untry'd world.

• But, oh ! consider we have other names,

• Husbands and fathers, and have things more dear

• To us than life, our children and our wives,

• Unfit for such an expedition ;

• What must become of them ?

• *Oro.* We wo't not wrong

• The virtue of our women, to believe

• There is a wife among them would refuse

• To share her husband's fortune. What is hard,

• We must make easy to 'em in our love : While we live,

• And have our limbs, we can take care of them ;

• Therefore I still propose to lead our march

• Down to the sea, and plant a colony ;

• Where, in our native innocence, we shall live

• Free, and be able to defend ourselves ;

• Till stress of weather, or some accident,

• Provide a ship for us.

• *Abo.*

- ' *Abo.* An accident!
 ' The luckiest accident presents itself;
 ' The very ship that brought and made us slaves,
 ' Swims in the river still. I see no cause
 ' But we may seize on that.
 ' *Oro.* It shall be so:
 ' There is a justice in it pleases me:
 ' Do you agree to it? [To the Slaves.]
 ' *Omnes.* We follow you.
 ' *Oro.* You do not relish it. [To Hotman.]
 ' *Hot.* I am afraid
 ' You'll find it difficult and dangerous.
 ' *Abo.* Are you the man to find the dangers first?
 ' You should have giv'n example. Dangerous!
 ' I thought you had not understood the word;
 ' You, who would be the head, the hand and heart;
 ' Sir, I remember you, you can talk well;
 ' I wo't doubt but you'll maintain your word.
 ' *Oro.* This fellow is not right; I'll try him further;
[To Aboan.]
 ' The danger will be certain to us all,
 ' And Death most certain in miscarrying.
 ' We must expect no mercy, if we fail:
 ' Therefore our way must be not to expect:
 ' We'll put it out of expectation,
 ' By death upon the place, or liberty.
 ' There is no mean, but death, or liberty.
 ' There's no man here I hope, but comes prepar'd
 ' For all that can befall him.
 ' *Abo.* Death is all:
 ' In most conditions of humanity
 ' To be desir'd, but to be shunn'd by none:
 ' The remedy of many, with of some,
 ' And certain end of all.
 ' If there be one among us, who can fear
 ' The face of death appearing like a friend,
 ' As in this cause of honour death must be:
 ' How will he tremble when he sees him dress'd
 ' In the wild fury of our enemies,
 ' In all the terrors of their cruelty!

' For

- For now, if we should fall into their hands,
- Could they invent a thousand murd'ring ways,
- By rack'ing torments, we should feel 'em all.

• *Hot.* What will become of us?

• *Oro.* Observe him now. [*To Abo. concerning Hot.*]

- I could die, altogether, like a man;
- As you, and you, and all of us, must do.
- But who can promise for his bravery
- Upon the rack? where fainting, weary life,
- Hunted thro' ev'ry limb, is forc'd to feel
- An agonizing death of all its parts?
- Who can bear this? resolve to be impal'd?
- His skin flead off, and roasted yet alive?
- The quivering flesh torn from his broken bones
- By burning pincers? Who can bear these pains?

• *Hot.* They are not to be borne.

[*Discovering all the confusion of fear.*]

• *Oro.* You see him now, this man of mighty words!

• *Abo.* How his eyes roll!

• *Oro.* He cannot hide his fear:

• I try'd him this way, and have found him out.

• *Abo.* I could not have believ'd it. Such a blaze,

• And not a spark of fire!

• *Oro.* His violence

• Made me suspect: Now I'm convinc'd.

• *Abo.* What shall we do with him?

• *Oro.* He is not fit——

• *Abo.* Fit! hang him, he is only fit to be

• Just what he is, to live and die a slave:

• The base companion of his servile fears.

• *Oro.* We are not safe with him.

• *Abo.* Do you think so?

• *Oro.* He'll certainly betray us.

• *Abo.* That he shan't:

• I can take care of that: I have a way.

• To take him off his evidence.

• *Oro.* What way?

• *Abo.* I'll stop his mouth before you, stab him here,

• And then let him inform.

• [*Going to stab Hotman, Oroonoko holds him.*]

C

• *Oro.*

' *Oro.* Thou art not mad ?

' *Abo.* I would secure ourselves.

' *Orb.* It sha'not be this way ; say cannot be ;
 ' His murder will alarm all the rest,
 ' Make 'em suspect us of barbarity,
 ' And, may be, fall away from our design.
 ' We'll not set out in blood. We have, my friends,
 ' This night to furnish what we can provide
 ' For our security and just defence.
 ' If there be one among us we suspect
 ' Of baseness, or vile fear, it will become
 ' Our common care to have an eye on him ;
 ' I wo'not name the man.

' *Abo.* You guess at him. [To Hotman.

' *Oro.* To-morrow, early as the breaking day,
 ' We rendezvous behind the citron grove.
 ' That ship secur'd, we may transport ourselves
 ' To our respective homes : My father's kingdom
 ' Shall open her wide arms to take you in,
 ' And nurse you for her own, adopt you all,
 ' All, who will follow me.

' *Omnes.* All, all follow you.

' *Oro.* There I can give you all your liberty :
 ' Bestow its blessings, and secure 'em yours.
 ' There you shall live with honour, as becomes
 ' My fellow-sufferers and worthy friends.
 ' Thus, if we do succeed : But, if we fall
 ' In our attempt, 'tis nobler still to die,
 ' Than drag the galling yoke of slavery.'

[*Exeunt.*

A C T IV.

Enter Weldon and Jack Stanmore.

' *Weld.* **Y**OU see, honest Jack, I have been in-
 ' dustrious for you : You must take some
 ' pains now to serve yourself.

' *J. Stan.*

J. Stan. Gad, Mr *Weldon*, I have taken a great deal of pains; and, if the Widow speak honestly, faith and troth she'll tell you what a pains-taker I am.

Weld. Fie, fie, not me; I am her husband you know. She won't tell me what pains you have taken with her: Besides, she takes you for me.

J. Stan. That's true: I forgot you had married her. But if you knew all——

Weld. 'Tis no matter for my knowing all, if she does.

J. Stan. Ay, ay, she does know, and more than ever she knew since she was a woman, for the time, I will be bold to say; for I have done——

Weld. The devil take you, for you'll never have done.

J. Stan. As old as she is, she has a wrinkle behind more than she had, I believe; for I have taught her what she never knew in her life before.

Weld. What care I what wrinkles she has? or what you have taught her? If you'll let me advise you, you may: If not, you may prate on, and ruin the whole design.

J. Stan. Well, well, I have done.

Weld. Nobody but your cousin, and you, and I, know any thing of this matter. I have marry'd Mrs. *Lackitt*, and put you to bed to her, which she knows nothing of, to serve you: In two or three days I'll bring it about so, to resign up my claim, and with her consent, quietly to you.

J. Stan. But how will you do it?

Weld. That must be my business: In the mean time, if you should make any noise, 'twill come to her ears, and be impossible to reconcile her.

J. Stan. Nay, as for that, I know the way to reconcile her, I warrant you.

Weld. But how will you get her money? I am marry'd to her.

J. Stan. That I don't know, indeed.

Weld. You must leave it to me, you find; all the pains I shall put you to, will be to be silent: You can hold your tongue for two or three days?

J. Stan. Truly not well, in a matter of this nature:

• I should be very unwilling to lose the reputation of
• this night's work, and the pleasure of telling it.

• *Weld.* You must mortify that vanity a little: You
• will have time enough to brag and lie of your man-
• hood, when you have her in a bare-fac'd condition to
• disprove you.

• *J. Stan.* Well, I'll try what I can do: The hopes
• of her money must do it.

• *Weld.* You'll come at night again? 'Tis your own
• business.

• *J. Stan.* But you have the credit on't.

• *Weld.* 'Twill be our own another day, as the widow
• says. Send your cousin to me: I want his advice.

• *J. Stan.* I want to be recruited, I'm sure; a good
• breakfast, and to bed: She has rock'd my cradle suf-
• ficiently. [Exit.

• *Weld.* She would have a husband; and, if all be as
• he says, she has no reason to complain: But there's no
• relying on what men say upon these occasions: They
• have the benefit of their bragging, by recommending
• their abilities to other women: Their's is a trading
• estate, that lives upon credit, and increases by removing
• it out of one bank into another. Now poor women have
• not these opportunities: We must keep our stocks
• dead by us, at home, to be ready for a purchase, when
• it comes, a husband, let him be never so dear, and be
• glad of him: Or venture our fortunes abroad on such
• rotten security, that the principal and interest, nay,
• very often, our persons are in danger. If the women
• would agree (which they never will) to call home their
• effects, how many proper gentlemen would sneak into
• another way of living, for want of being responsible
• in this! then husbands would be cheaper: Here comes
• the widow, she'll tell truth; she'll not bear false wit-
• ness against her own interest, I know.

Enter Widow Lackitt.

Weld. Now, Mrs. Lackitt.

• *Wid.* Well, well, Lackitt, or what you will now;
• now I am marry'd to you: I am very well pleas'd with
• what I have done, I assure you?

Weld.

Weld. And with what I have done too, I hope.

Wid. Ah! Mr. *Weldon*! I say nothing, but you're a dear man, and I did not think it had been in you.

Weld. I have more in me than you imagine.

Wid. No no, you can't have more than I imagine. 'Tis impossible to have more: You have enough for any woman, in an honest way, that I will say for you.

Weld. Then I find you are satisfied.

Wid. Satisfied! No indeed: I'm not to be satisfied with you or without you: To be satisfied is to have enough of you. Now, 'tis a folly to lie, I shall never think I can have enough of you. I shall be very fond of you. Would you have me fond of you? What do you do to me, to make me love you so well?

Weld. Can't you tell what?

Wid. Go, there's no speaking to you: You bring all the blood of one's body into one's face, so you do: Why do you talk so?

Weld. Why, how do I talk?

Wid. You know how: But a little colour becomes me, I believe: How do I look to-day?

Weld. O! most lovingly, most amiably.

Wid. Nay, this can't be long a secret, I find, I shall discover it by my countenance.

Weld. The women will find you out, you look so chearfully.

Wid. But do I, do I really look so chearfully, so amiably? There's no such paint in the world as the natural glowing of a complexion. Let 'em find me out if they please, poor creatures, I pity 'em: They envy me, I'm sure, and would be glad to mend their looks upon the same occasion. The young jill-firting girls, forsooth, believe no body must have a husband but themselves: but I would have them to know there are other things to be taken care of, besides their green-sickness.

Weld. Ay, sure, or the physicians would have but little practice.

Wid. Mr. *Weldon*, what must I call you? I must have some pretty fond name or other for you. What shall I call you?

Wid. I thought you lik'd my own name.

Wid. Yes, yes, I like it, but I must have a nick-name for you: most women have nick-names for their husbands.

Wid. Cuckold.

Wid. No, no, but 'tis very pretty before company; it looks negligent, and is the fashion, you know.

Wid. To be negligent of their husbands, it is, indeed.

Wid. Nay then, I won't be in the fashion; for I can never be negligent of dear Mr. *Weldon*: And, to convince you, here's something to encourage you not to be negligent of me, [*Gives him a purse and a little casket.* five hundred pounds in gold in this; and jewels to the value of five hundred pounds more in this.

[*Weldon opens the casket.*]

Wid. Ay, marry, this will encourage me indeed.

Wid. There are comforts in marrying an elderly woman, Mr. *Weldon*: Now a young woman would have fancy'd she had paid you with her person, or had done you the favour.

Wid. What do you talk of young women: You are as young as any of 'em, in every thing but their folly and ignorance.

Wid. And do you think me so? But I have reason to suspect you. Was not I seen at your house this morning, do you think?

Wid. You may venture again: You'll come at night, I suppose.

Wid. O dear! at night? so soon?

Wid. Nay, if you think it so soon—

Wid. O! no, 'tis not for that, Mr. *Weldon*, but—

Wid. You won't come then?

Wid. Won't! I don't say I won't: That is not a word for a wife: If you command me—

Wid. To please yourself.

Wid. I will come to please you.

Wid. To please yourself, own it.

Wid. Well, well, to please myself then! You're the strangest man in the world, nothing can scape you; you'll go to the bottom of every thing.

[*Enter*]

Enter Daniel, Lucy following.

Dan. What would you have? what do you follow me for?

Luc. Why mayn't I follow you? I must follow you now all the world over.

Dan. Hold you, hold you there: Not so far, by a mile or two; I have enough of your company already, by'r lady, and something to spare: You may go home to your brother, an you will; I have no farther to do with you.

Wid. Why, *Daniel*, child, thou art not out of thy wits, sure, art thou?

Dan. Nay, marry, I don't know; but I am very near, I believe: I am alter'd for the worse mightily, since you saw me; and she has been the cause of it there.

Wid. How so, child?

Dan. I told you before what would come on't of putting me to bed to a strange woman; but you would not be said nay.

Wid. She is your wife now, child, you must love her.

Dan. Why, so I did, at first.

Wid. But you must love her always.

Dan. Always! I lov'd her as long as I could, mother, and as long as loving was good, I believe; for I find now I don't care a fig for her.

Luc. Why, you lubberly, slovenly, misbegotten blockhead——

Wid. Nay, Mistress *Lucy*, say any thing else, and spare not: But, as to his begetting, that touches me: He is as honestly begotten, tho' I say it, that he is the worse again.

Luc. I see all good nature is thrown away upon you——

Wid. It was so with his father before him: He takes after him.

Luc. And therefore I will use you as you deserve, you tony.

Wid. Indeed he deserves bad enough; but don't call him out of his name: His name is *Daniel*, you know.

Dan. She may call me hermaphrodite if she will; for I hardly know whether I'm a boy or girl.

Wid. A boy, I warrant thee, as long as thou liv'st.

Dan. Let her call me, what she pleases, mother, 'tis not her tongue that I'm afraid of.

Luc. I will make such a beast of thee, such a cuckold!

Wid. O, pray, no I hope; do nothing rashly Mrs. Lucy.

Luc. Such a cuckold I will make of thee.

Dan. I had rather be a cuckold than what you would make of me in a week, I'm sure; I have no more manhood left in me already, than there is, saving the mark, in one of my mother's old under petticoats here.

Wid. Sirrah, sirrah, meddle with your wife's petticoats, and let your mother's alone, you ungracious bird you. [Beats him.]

Dan. Why, is the devil in the woman? What have I said now? Do you know, if you were ask'd, I trow? But you are all of a bundle; ev'n hang together: He that unties you, makes a rod for his own tail; and so he will find it that has any thing to do with you.

Wid. Ay, rogue enough, you shall find it: I have a rod for your tail still.

Dan. No wife, and I care not.

Wid. I'll swinge you into better manners, you booby.

[Beats him off, and exit.]

Wid. You have consummated our project upon him.

Luc. Nay, if I have a limb of the fortune, I care not who has the whole body of the fool.

Wid. That you shall, and a large one I promise you.

Luc. Have you heard the news? They talk of an English ship in the river.

Wid. I have heard on't; and am preparing to receive it, as fast as I can.

Luc. There's something the matter too with the slaves, some disturbance or other, I don't know what 'tis.

Wid. So much the better still: We fish in troubled waters. We shall have fewer eyes upon us. Pray go you home, and be ready to assist me in your part of the design.

Luc. I can't fail in mine. [Exit.]

Wid. The widow has furnish'd me, I thank her, to carry it on. Now I have got a wife, 'tis high time to think of getting a husband. I carry my fortune about

me

me—a thousand pounds in gold and jewels. Let me see—'twill be a considerable trust: And I think I shall lay it out to advantage.

Enter Stanmore.

Stan. So, *Weldon*, *Jack* has told me his success; and his hopes of marrying the Widow by your means.

Weld. I have strain'd a point, *Stanmore*, upon your account, to be serviceable to your family.

Stan. I take it upon my account; and am very much obliged to you. But here we are all in an uproar.

Weld. So they say; what's the matter?

Stan. A mutiny among the slaves: *Oroonoko* is at the head of 'em. Our Governor is gone out with his rascally militia against 'em. What it may come to no body knows.

Weld. For my part, I shall do as well as the rest. But I'm concerned for my sister and cousin, whom I expect in the ship from *England*.

Stan. There's no danger of 'em.

Weld. I have a thousand pounds here, in gold and jewels, for my cousin's use, that I would more particularly take care of: 'Tis too great a sum to venture at home; and I would not have her wrong'd of it: therefore, to secure it, I think my best way will be to put it into your own keeping.

Stan. You have a very good opinion of my honesty.

[Takes the purse and casket.]

Weld. I have, indeed; if any thing should happen to me, in this bustle; as no body is secure of accidents, I know you will take my cousin into your protection and care; and

Stan. You may be sure on't.

Weld. If you hear she is dead, as she may be, then I desire you to accept of the thousand pounds as a legacy, and token of my friendship; my sister is provided for.

Stan. Why, you amaze me; but you are never the nearer dying, I hope; for making your will?

Weld. Not a jot; but I love to be before-hand with fortune. If she comes safe, this is not a place for a single woman, you know; pray see her married as soon as you can.

Stan. *[Exit Weld.]* *AC.*

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Stan. If she be as handsome as her picture, I can promise her a husband.

Weld. If you like her when you see her, I wish nothing so much as to have you marry her yourself.

Stan. From what I have heard of her, and my engagements to you, it must be her fault if I don't: I hope to have her from your own hand.

Weld. And I hope to give her to you, and all this.

Stan. Ay, ay, hang these melancholy reflections: Your generosity has engaged all my services.

Weld. I always thought you worth making a friend.

Stan. You shan't find your good opinion thrown away upon me: I am in your debt, and shall think so as long as I live. [Exit.]

SCENE, The Country.

Enter on one side of the stage Oroonoko, Aboan, with the Slaves. Imoinda with a bow and quiver; the women, some leading, others carrying their children upon their backs.

Oro. The women with their children fall behind.

Imoinda, you must not expose yourself;

Retire, my love: I almost fear for you.

Imo. I fear no danger; life, or death, I will enjoy with you.

Oro. My person is your guard.

Abo. "Now, Sir, blame yourself:" If you had not prevented my cutting his throat, that coward there had not discovered us; he comes now to upbraid you.

Enter on the other side the Governor, talking to Hotman, with his rabble.

Gov. This is the very thing I would have wish'd: Your honest service to the government: [To Hotman.] Shall be rewarded with your liberty.

Abo. His honest service! call it what it is, His villainy, the service of his fear: If he pretends to honest services, Let him stand out, and meet me like a man.

[Advancing.]
Oro. Hold, you: and you who come against us, hold: I charge you in a general good to all.

And

And with I could command you, to prevent
The bloody havock of the murd'ring sword.
I would not urge destruction uncompell'd :
But, if you follow fate, you find it here.
The bounds are set, the limits of our lives :
Between us lies the gaping gulph of death,
To swallow all : Who first advances.—

Enter the Captain, with his Crew.

Capt. Here, here, here they are, Governor :
What, seize upon my ship !
Come, boys, fall on —

[Advancing first, Oroonoko kills him.]

Oro. Thou art fall'n indeed ;
Thy own blood be upon thee.

Gov. Rest it there.

He did deserve his death. 'Take him away.'

[The body remov'd.]

You see, Sir, you and those mistaken men
Must be our witnesses, we do not come
As enemies, and thirsting for your blood.
If we desir'd your ruin, the revenge
Of our companion's death had push'd it on.
But that we overlook, in a regard
To common safety, and the public good.

Oro. Regard that public good ; draw off your men,
And leave us to our fortune : We're resolv'd.

Gov. Resolv'd ! on what ? your resolutions
Are broken, overturn'd, prevented, lost :

'What fortune now can you raise out of 'em ?

'Nay, grant we should draw off, what can you do ?

'Where can you move ? What more can you resolve ?

'Unless it be to throw yourselves away.'

Famine must eat you up, if you go on.

You see our numbers could with ease compel

What we request : And what do we request ?

Only to save yourselves.

[The women with their children gathering about the men.]

Oro. I'll hear no more.

'Women. Hear him, hear him, he takes no care of us.'

Gov. To those poor wretches, who have been seduc'd

And

And led away, to all, and ev'ry one,

We offer a full pardon——

Oro. Then fall on. *[Preparing to engage.]*

Gov. Lay hold upon't, before it be too late,
Pardon and mercy.

*[The women clinging about the men, they leave Oroonoko,
and fall upon their faces, crying out for pardon.]*

Slaves. Pardon, mercy, pardon.

Oro. Let them go all. Now, Governor, I see,
I own the folly of my enterprise,

The rashness of this action; and must blush,
Quite through this veil of night, a whitely shame,
To think I could design to make those free,
Who were by nature slaves; wretches design'd
To be their masters' dogs, and lick their feet.

Whip, whip 'em to the knowledge of your gods,

Your Christian gods, who suffer you to be

Unjust, dishonest, cowardly, and base:

And give 'em your excuse for being so.

I would not live on the same earth with creatures,
That only have the faces of their kind:

Why should they look like men, who are not so?

When they put off their noble natures, for

The grov'ling qualities of downcast beasts,

I wish they had their tails.

Abo. Then we should know 'em.

Oro. We were too few before for victory.

We're still enow to die. *[To Imoinda and Aboan.]*

Enter Blandford.

Gov. Live, Royal Sir:

Live, and be happy long on your own terms;

Only consent to yield, and you shall have

What terms you can propose for you and yours,

Oro. Consent to yield! shall I betray myself?

Gov. Alas! we cannot fear that your small force,

The force of two, with a weak woman's arms,

Should conquer us. I speak, in the regard

And honour of your worth, in my desire

And forwardness to serve so great a man.

I would not have it lie upon my thoughts,

That

- That I was the occasion of the fall
- Of such a prince, whose courage, carried on
- In a more noble cause, would well deserve
- The empire of the world.

• *Oro.* You can speak fair.

- *Gov.* Your undertaking, tho' it would have brought
- So great a loss to us, we must all say
- Was generous, and noble; and shall be
- Regarded only as the fire of youth,
- That will break out sometimes in gallant souls;
- We'll think it but the natural impulse,
- A rash impatience of liberty:
- No otherwise.

• *Oro.* Think it what you will.

- I was not born to render an account
- Of what I do, to any but myself.

[*Bland. comes forward.*

Bland. I'm glad you have proceeded by fair means.

[*To the Governor.*

I came to be a mediator.

Gov. Try what you can work upon him.

Oro. Are you come against me too?

Bland. Is this to come against you?

[*Offering his sword to Oroonoko.*

Unarm'd to put myself into your hands?

I come, I hope, to serve you.

Oro. You have serv'd me;

I thank you for't: And I am pleas'd to think
You were my friend, while I had need of one:
But now 'tis past; this farewell, and be gone.

[*Embraces him.*

Bland. It is not past, and I must serve you still.

- I would make up these breaches which the sword
- Will widen more, and close us all in love.

Oro. I know what I have done, and I should be
A child to think they ever can forgive.

Forgive! were there but that, I would not live.

To be forgiven: Is there a Power on earth,

That I can ever need forgiveness from?

Bland. You sha'not need it.

Oro. No, I wo'not need it.

Bland.

Bland. You see he offers you your own conditions,
For you and yours..

Oro. Must I capitulate?
Precariously compound, on stinted terms,
To save my life?

Bland. Sir, he imposes none.
You make 'em for your own security.
'If your great heart cannot descend to treat,
'In adverse fortune, with an enemy,
'Yet sure your honour's safe, you may accept
'Offers of peace and safety from a friend.'

Gov. He will rely on what you say to him. [*To Bland.*
Offer him what you can; I will confirm
And make all good: Be you my pledge of trust.

Bland. I'll answer with my life for all he says.

Gov. Ay, do, and pay the forfeit if you please. [*Aside.*

Bland. Consider, Sir, can you consent to throw
That blessing from you? you so hardly found; [*Of Imo.*
And so much valu'd once?

Oro. *Imoinda!* Oh!

'Tis she that holds me on this argument
Of tedious life: I could resolve it soon,
Were this curst being only in debate.
But my *Imoinda* struggles in my soul:
She makes a coward of me, I confess:
I am afraid to part with her in death;
And more afraid of life to lose her here.

Bland. This way you must lose her: Think upon
The weakness of her sex, made yet more weak
With her condition, requiring rest,
And soft indulging ease, to nurse your hope,
And make you a glad father.

Oro. There I feel
A father's fondness, and a husband's love.
They seize upon my heart, strain all its strings,
To pull me to 'em from my stern resolve.
Husband and father! all the melting art
Of eloquence lives in those soft'ning names.
Methinks I see the babe, with infant hands,
Pleading for life, and begging to be born.

• Shall

- Shall I forbid its birth; deny him light?
- The heavenly comforts of all-cheering light?
- And make the womb the dungeon of his death?
- His bleeding mother his sad monument?

These are the calls of nature, that call loud;
They will be heard, and conquer in their cause:
He must not be a man who can resist 'em.

No, my *Imoinda*! I will venture all
To save thee, and that little innocent:
The world may be a better friend to him
Than I have found it. Now I yield myself;

[*Gives up his sword.*]

The conflict's past, and we are in your hands.

[*Several men get about Oroonoko and Aboan, and seize them.*]

Gov. So you shall find you are. Dispose of them
As I commanded you.

Bland. Good Heav'n forbid! you cannot mean —

Gov. This is not your concern.

[*To Blandford, who goes to Oroonoko.*]

I must take care of you.

[*To Imoinda.*]

Imo. I'm at the end

Of all my care: Here will I die with him. [*Holding Oro.*]

Oro. You shall not force her from me. [*He holds her.*]

Gov. Then I must. [*They force her from him.*]

Try other means, and conquer force by force:

Break, cut off his hold, bring her away.

Imo. I do not ask to live, kill me but here.

Oro. O bloody dogs! inhuman murderers!

[*Imoinda forc'd out of one door by the Governor and others. Oroonoko and Aboan hurried out of another.*]

[*Exeunt.*]

A C T V.

Enter Stanmore, Lucy, and Charlotte.

• *Stan.* 'TIS strange we cannot hear of him: Can
no-body give an account of him?

• *Luc.* Nay, I begin to despair: I give him for gone.

• *Stan.*

' *Stan.* Not so, I hope

' *Luc.* There are so many disturbances in this devilish country! Would we had never seen it!

' *Stan.* This is but a cold welcome for you, Madam, after so troublesome a voyage.

' *Char.* A cold welcome indeed, Sir, without my cousin *Weldon*: He was the best friend I had in the world.

' *Stan.* He was a very good friend of yours, indeed, Madam.

' *Luc.* They have made him away, murder'd him for his money, I believe; he took a considerable sum out with him, I know that has been his ruin.

' *Stan.* That has done him no injury, to my knowledge: for this morning he put into my custody what you speak of, I suppose—a thousand pounds for the use of this lady.

' *Char.* I was always oblig'd to him; and he has shewn his care of me, in placing my little affairs in such honourable hands.

' *Stan.* He gave me a particular charge of you, Madam, very particular, so particular, that you will be surpriz'd when I tell you.

' *Char.* What, pray, Sir?

' *Stan.* I am engag'd to get you a husband; I promised that before I saw you; and, now I have seen you, you must give me leave to offer you myself.

' *Luc.* Nay, cousin, never be coy upon the matter; to my knowledge, my brother always design'd you for this gentleman.

' *Stan.* You hear, Madam, he has given me his interest, and 'tis the favour I would have begg'd of him: Lord! you are so like him——

' *Char.* That you are oblig'd to say you like me for his sake.

' *Stan.* I should be glad to love you for your own.

Char. If I should consent to the fine things you can say to me, how would you look at last, to find 'em thrown away on an old acquaintance?

Stan. An old acquaintance?

Char.

Char. Lord, how easily are you men to be impos'd upon! I am no cousin newly arriv'd from *England*, not I; but the very *Weldon* you wot of.

Stan. *Weldon!*

Char. Not murder'd, nor made away, as my sister would have you believe; but am in very good health, your old friend in breeches that was, and now your humble servant in petticoats.

Stan. I am glad we have you again. But what service can you do me in petticoats, pray?

Char. Can't you tell what?

Stan. Not I, by my troth: I have found my friend and lost my mistress, it seems, which I did not expect from your petticoats.

Char. Come, come, you have had a friend of your mistress long enough; 'tis high time now to have a mistress of your friend.

Stan. What do you say?

Char. I am a woman, Sir.

Stan. A woman!

Char. As arrant a woman as you would have had me, but now, I assure you,

Stan. And at my service?

Char. If you have any for me in petticoats.

Stan. Yes, yes, I shall find you employment.

Char. You wonder at my proceeding, I believe.

Stan. 'Tis a little extraordinary, indeed.

Char. I have taken some pains to come into your favour,

Stan. You might have had it cheaper a great deal.

Char. I might have married you in the person of my *English* cousin, but could not consent to cheat you, even in the thing I had a mind to.

Stan. 'Twas done as you do every thing.

Char. I need not tell you, I made that little plot, and carry'd it on only for this opportunity. I was resolv'd to see whether you lik'd me as a woman, or not: If I had found you indifferent, I would have endeavour'd to have been so too; But you say you like me, and therefore I have ventur'd to discover the truth.

Stan.

Stan. Like you ! I like you so well, that I am afraid you won't think marriage a proof on't : Shall I give you any other ?

Char. No, no, I'm inclin'd to believe you, and that shall convince me. At more leisure I'll satisfy you how I came to be in man's cloaths ; for no ill, I assure you, tho' I have happen'd to play the rogue in 'em. ' They ' have assisted me in marrying my sister, and have gone a ' great way in befriending your cousin *Jack* with the *Widow*. Can you forgive me for pimping for your family ?

Enter Jack Stanmore.

Stan. So, *Jack*, what news with you ?

J. Stan. I am the forepart of the *Widow* you know ; she's coming after with the body of the family, the young 'squire in her hand, my son-in-law that is to be, with the help of Mr. *Weldon*.

Char. Say you so, Sir ? [*Clapping Jack upon the back.*]

Enter Widow Lackitt with her son Daniel.

Wid. So, Mrs. *Lucy*, I have brought him about again ; I have chastis'd him, I have made him as supple as a glove for your wearing, to pull on, or throw off, at your pleasure. Will you ever rebel again ? will you, firrah ? But come, come, down on your marrow-bones, and ask her forgiveness. [*Daniel kneels.*] Say after me : Pray forsooth wife.

Dan. Pray forsooth wife.

Luc. Well, well, this is a day of good-nature, and so I take you into favour : But first take the oath of allegiance ; [*He kisses her hand, and rises.*] If ever you do so again —

Dan. Nay, marry if I do, I shall have the worst on't.

Luc. Here's a stranger, forsooth, would be glad to be known to you, a sister of mine, pray salute her.

[*Starts at Charlotte.*]

Wid. Your sister, Mrs. *Lucy* ! What do you mean ? This is your brother, Mr. *Weldon* : Do you think I do not know Mr. *Weldon* ?

Luc. Have a care what you say : This Gentleman's about marrying her : You may spoil all.

Wid. Fiddle, faddle ; what ! You would put a trick upon me.

Char.

Char. No faith, Widow, the trick is over; it has taken sufficiently; and now I will teach you the trick, to prevent your being cheated another time.

Wid. How! cheated, Mr. *Weldon*!

Char. Why, aye, you will always take things by the wrong handle: I see you will have me Mr. *Weldon*: I grant you I was Mr. *Weldon* a little while to please you or so: But Mr. *Stanmore* here has persuaded me into a woman again.

Wid. A woman! pray let me speak with you [*Drawing her aside.*] You are not in earnest, I hope? a woman!

Char. Really a woman.

Wid. Gads my life! I could not be cheated in every thing: I know a man from a woman at these years, or the devil is in't. Pray, did not you marry me?

Char. You would have it so.

Wid. And did not I give you a thousand pounds this morning?

Char. Yes, indeed, 'twas more than I deserv'd: But you had your penny-worth for your penny, I suppose: You seem'd to be pleas'd with your bargain.

Wid. A rare bargain I have made on't truly! I have laid out my money to a fine purpose upon a woman.

Char. You would have a husband, and I provided for you as well as I could.

Wid. Yes, yes, you have provided for me.

Char. And you have paid me very well for't; I thank you.

Wid. 'Tis very well: I may be with child too, for aught I know, and may go look for the father.

Char. Nay, if you think so; 'tis time to look about you, indeed. 'Ev'n make up the matter as well as you can, I advise you as a friend; and let us live neighbourly and lovingly together.

Wid. I have nothing else for it that I know of now.

Char. For my part, Mrs. *Lackitt*, your thousand pounds will engage me not to laugh at you. Then my sister is marry'd to your son; he is to have half your estate, I know; and indeed they may live upon it very comfortably to themselves, and very creditably to you.

Wid.

Wid. Nay, I can blame no body but myself.

Char. You have enough for a husband still, and that you may bestow upon honest *Jack Stanmore*.

Wid. Is he the man then?

Char. He is the man you are oblig'd to.

J. Stan. Yes faith, Widow, I am the man: I have done fairly by you, you find; you know what you have to trust to before hand.

Wid. Well, well, I see you will have me, ev'n marry me, and make an end of the business.

Stan. Why that's well said, now we are all agreed, and all well provided for.

Enter a servant to Stanmore.

Serv. Sir, Mr. *Blandford* desires you to come to him, and bring as many of your friends as you can with you.

Stan. I come to him. You shall all go along with me. Come, young Gentleman, marriage is the fashion, you see, you must like it now.

Dan. If I don't, how shall I help myself?

Luc. Nay, you may hang yourself in the noose, if you please, but you'll never get out on't with struggling.

Dan. Come then, let's e'en jog on in the old road. Cuckold, or worse, I must now be contented: I'm not the first has marry'd and repented. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter Governor, with Blandford and Planters.

Bland. Have you no reverence of future fame?
No awe upon your actions, from the tongues,
The cens'ring tongues of men, that will be free?

'If you confess humanity, believe

'There is a God, or devil, to reward

'Our doings here; do not provoke your fate.

'The hand of Heav'n is arm'd against these crimes,

'With hotter thunderbolts, prepar'd to shoot,

'And nail you to the earth, a sad example;

'A monument of faithless infamy.'

*Enter Stanmore, J. Stanmore, Charlotte, Lucy,
Widow, and Daniel.*

So, *Stanmore*, you; I know, the women too,
Will join with me: 'Tis *Oroonoko's* cause,

A lover's

A lover's cause, a wretched woman's cause,
That will become your intercession. [*To the Women.*]

1st Plant. Never mind 'em, Governor; he ought to be made an example for the good of the plantation.

2d Plant. Ay, ay, 'twill frighten the negroes from attempting the like again.

1st Plant. What, rise against their lords and masters! at this rate no man is safe from his own slaves.

2d Plant. No, no more he is. Therefore, one and all, Governor, we declare for hanging.

Omn. Plant. Ay, ay, hang him, hang him.

Wid. What! hang him? O forbid it, Governor.

Char. Luc. We all petition for him.

J. Stan. They are for a holiday; guilty, or not, is not the business, hanging is their sport.

Bland. We are not sure, so wretched, to have these, The rabble, judge for us: The hanging croud, The arbitrary guard of Fortune's power, Who wait to catch the sentence of her frowns, And hurry all to ruin the condemnns.

Stan. So far from farther wrong, that 'tis a shame He should be where he is. Good Governor, Order his liberty: He yielded up Himself, his all, at your discretion.

Bland. Discretion! no, he yielded on your word; And I am made the cautionary pledge, The gage and hostage of your keeping it. Remember, Sir, he yielded on your word; Your word! which honest men will think should be The last resort of truth, and trust on earth: There's no appeal beyond it but to Heav'n:

• An oath is a recognizance to Heav'n,
• Binding us over in the courts above,
• To plead to the indictment of our crimes,
• That those who 'scape this world should suffer there.
• But in the common intercourse of men,
• (Where the dread Majesty is not invoc'd,
• His honour not immediately concern'd,
• Not made a party in our interests),
• Our word is all to be rely'd upon.'

Wid.

Wid. Come, come, you'll be as good as your word, we know.

Stan. He's out of all power of doing any harm now, if he were disposed to it.

Char. But he is not disposed to it.

Bland. To keep him where he is, will make him soon Find out some desperate way to liberty :
He'll hang himself, or dash out his mad brains.

Char. Pray try him by gentle means : We'll all be Tureties for him.

Omn. All, all.

'Luc. We will all answer for him now.'

Gov. Well, you will have it so, do what you please, just what you will with him, I give you leave.

[*Exit:*

Bland. We thank you, Sir ; this way, pray come with me.

[*Exeunt.*

The SCENE drawn shows Oroonoko upon his back, his legs and arms stretch'd out, and chain'd to the ground.

Enter Blandford, Stanmore, &c.

Bland. O miserable sight ! help every one,
Assist me all to free him from his chains.

[*They help him up and bring him forward, looking down.*

Most injur'd prince ! how shall we clear ourselves ?

We cannot hope you will vouchsafe to hear,

Or credit what we say in the defence

And cause of our suspected innocence.

Stan. We are not guilty of your injuries,

No way consenting to 'em ; but abhor,

Abominate, and loath this cruelty.

'Bland. It is our curse, but make it not our crime ;

'A heavy curse upon-us, that we must

'Share any thing in common, ev'n the light,

'The elements and seasons, with such men,

'Whose principles, like the fam'd dragons teeth,

'Scatter'd and sown, would shoot a harvest up

'Of fighting mischiefs to confound themselves,

'And ruin all about 'em.

'Stan.

• *Stan.* Profligates!
 • Whose bold *Titanian* impiety
 • Would once again pollute their mother earth,
 • Force her to teem with her old monstrous brood
 • Of giants, and forget the race of men.
 • *Bland.* We are not so: Believe us innocent,
 • We come prepar'd with all our services,
 • To offer a redress of your base wrongs.
 • Which way shall we employ 'em?
 • *Stan.* Tell us, Sir?

• If there is any thing that can atone?
 • But nothing can: that may be some amends'—

Oro. If you would have me think you are not all
 Confederates, all accessory to

The base injustice of your Governor;
 If you would have me live, as you appear
 Concern'd for me; if you would have me live
 To thank, and bless you, there is yet a way
 To tie me ever to your honest love;

Bring my *Imoinda* to me; give me her,
 To charm my sorrows, and, if possible,
 I'll sit down with my wrongs, never to rise
 Against my fate, or think of vengeance more.

Bland. Be satisfy'd, you may depend upon us,
 We'll bring her safe to you, and suddenly.

Char. We will not leave you in so good a work.

Wid. No, no, we'll go with you.

Bland. In the mean time.

Endeavour to forget, Sir, and forgive;
 And hope a better fortune.

[*Exeunt.*]

Oroonoko alone.

Oro. Forget! forgive! I must indeed forget
 When I forgive: But while I am a man,
 In flesh, that bears the living marks of shame,
 The print of his dishonourable chains,
 My memory still rousing up my wrongs,
 I never can forgive this Governor,
 This villain; the disgrace of trust, and place,
 And just contempt of delegated power.
 What shall I do? If I declare myself,

I know

I know him, he will sneak behind his guard
 Of followers, and brave me in his fears,
 Else, lion-like, with my devouring rage,
 I would rush on him, fasten on his throat,
 Tear a wide passage to his treacherous heart,
 And that way lay him open to the world. [Pausing.
 If I should turn his Christian arts on him,
 Promise him, speak him fair, flatter and creep
 With fawning steps, to get within his faith,
 I could betray him then, as he has me.
 But am I sure by that to fight myself?
 Lying's a certain mark of cowardice :
 And, when the tongue forgets its honesty,
 The heart and hand may drop their functions too,
 And nothing worthy be resolv'd or done.
 ' The man must go together, bad, or good :
 ' In one part frail, he soon grows weak in all.
 ' Honour should be concern'd in honour's cause,
 ' That is not to be cur'd by contraries,
 ' As bodies are, whose health is often drawn
 ' From rankest poisons.' Let me but find out
 An honest remedy, I have the hand,
 A minist'ring hand, that will apply it home. [Exit.

S C E N E, *The Governor's House.*

Enter Governor.

Gov. I would not have her tell me, she consents;
 In favour of the sex's modesty,
 That still should be presum'd ; because there is
 A greater impudence in owning it,
 Than in allowing all that we can do.
 ' This truth I know, and yet against myself.
 ' (So unaccountable are lovers ways)
 ' I talk, and lose the opportunities,
 ' Which love, and she, expects I should employ.
 ' Ev'n she expects : For when a man has said
 All that is fit, to save the decency,
 The women know the rest is to be done.
 I wo't not disappoint her.

[Going.
Enter

Enter Blandford, the Stanmores, Daniel, Mrs. Lackitt, Charlotte, and Lucy.

Wid. O Governor! I'm glad we've lit upon you.

Gov. Why! what's the matter?

Char. Nay, nothing extraordinary. But one good action draws on another. You have given the prince his freedom: now we come a begging for his wife: you won't refuse us.

Gov. Refuse you! No, no, what have I to do to refuse you?

Wid. You won't refuse to send her to him, the means.

Gov. I send her to him!

Wid. We have promis'd him to bring her.

Gov. You do very well; 'tis kindly done of you; Ev'n carry her to him, with all my heart.

Luc. You must tell us where she is.

Gov. I tell you! why, don't you know?

Bland. Your servant says she's in the house.

Gov. No, no, I brought her home at first, indeed; but I thought it would not look well to keep her here; I remov'd her in the hurry only to take care of her. What! she belongs to you: I have nothing to do with her.

Char. But where is she now, sir?

Gov. Why, faith, I can't say certainly: you'll hear of her at *Parbam* house, I suppose: there or thereabouts: I think I sent her there.

Bland. I'll have an eye on him

[Aside.

Exeunt all but the Governor.

Gov. I have ly'd myself into a little time, And must employ it: 'they'll be here again; But I must be before 'em.'

[Going out, he meets Imoinda, and seizes her.

Are you come?

I'll court no longer for a happiness

That is in my own keeping: you may still

Refuse to grant, so I have power to take.

The man that asks deserves to be deny'd.

[She disengages one hand, and draws his sword from his side upon him: Governor starts and retires; Blandford enters behind him.

D

Imo.

Imo. He does indeed, that asks unworthily.

Bland. You hear her, sir, that asks unworthily.

Gov. You are no judge.

Bland. I am of my own slave.

Gov. Be gone and leave us.

Bland. When you let her go.

Gov. To fasten upon you.

Bland. I must defend myself.

Imo. Help, murder, help!

[*Imoinda retreats towards the door, favour'd by Blandford; when they are closed, she throws down the sword, and runs out. Governor takes up his sword, they fight, close, and fall, Blandford upon him. Servants enter, and part them.*

Gov. She sha'not 'scape me so. I've gone too far, Not to go farther. Curse on my delay:

But yet she is, and shall be in my power.

Bland. Nay, then it is the war of honesty;

I know you, and will save you from yourself.

Gov. All come along with me.

[*Exeunt.*

S C E N E *the last.*

Enter Oroonoko.

Oro. To honour bound! and yet a slave to love!

I am distracted by their rival powers,

And both will be obey'd. O great revenge!

Thou raiser and restorer of fall'n fame!

Let me not be unworthy of thy aid,

For stopping in thy course: I still am thine;

But can't forget I am *Imoinda's* too.

She calls me from my wrongs to rescue her.

No man condemn me, who has never felt

A woman's power, or try'd the force of love:

* All tempers yield and soften in those fires:

* Our honours, interests resolving down,

* Run in the gentle current of our joys;

* But not to sink, and drown our memory;

¶ We mount again to action, like the sun,

• That rises from the bosom of the sea,

• To

' To run his glorious race of light a-new,
' And carry on the world.' Love, love will be
My first ambition, and my fame the next.

Enter Aboan bloody.

My eyes are turn'd against me and combine
With my sworn enemies, to represent
This spectacle of horror. *Aboan!*

' My ever faithful friend!'

Abo. I have no name

That can distinguish me from the vile earth,
To which I'm going: a poor abject worm,
That crawl'd awhile upon the bustling world,
And now am trampled to my dust again.

Oro. I see thee gash'd and mangled.

Abo. Spare my shame.

To tell how they have us'd me: but believe
The hangman's hand would have been merciful.
Do not you scorn me, sir, to think I can
Intend to live under this infamy.

I do not come for pity, to complain.

I've spent an honourable life with you.

The earliest servant of your rising fame,
And would attend it with my latest care:

My life was yours, and so shall be my death.

You must not live,

Bending and sinking, I have dragg'd my steps

Thus far to tell you that you cannot live:

To warn you of those ignominious wrongs,

Whips, rods, and all the instruments of death,

Which I have felt, and are prepar'd for you.

This was the duty that I had to pay.

'Tis done, and now I beg to be discharg'd.

Oro. What shall I do for thee?

Abo. My body tires,

And wo't not bear me off to liberty:

I shall again be taken, made a slave.

A sword, a dagger yet would rescue me.

I have not strength to go and find out death,

You must direct him to me.

Oro. Here he is,

[Gives him a dagger.

The only present I can make thee now :
 And, next the honourable means of life,
 I would bestow the honest means of death.

Aba. I cannot stay to thank you. If there is
 A being after this, I shall be yours
 In the next world, your faithful slave again.
 This is to try. [*Stabs himself.*] I had a living sense
 Of all your royal favours, but this last
 Strikes through my heart. I wo't not say farewell,
 For you must follow me. [*Dies.*]

Oro. In life and death,
 The guardian of my honour ! Follow thee !
 I should have gone before thee : then perhaps
 Thy fate had been prevented. All his care
 Was to preserve me from the barbarous rage
 That worry'd him, only for being mine.
 Why, why, you Gods ! why am I so accus'd,
 That it must be a reason of your wrath,
 A guilt, a crime sufficient to the fate
 Of any one, but to belong to me ?
 My friend has found it out, and my wife will soon :
 My wife ! the very fear's too much for life.
 I can't support it. Where ? *Imoinda* ! Oh !

[*Going out, she meets him, running into his arms.*]
 Thou bosom softness ! Down of all my cares !
 I could recline my thoughts upon this breast
 To a forgetfulness of all my griefs,
 And yet be happy : but it wo't not be,
 Thou art disorder'd, pale, and out of breath !
 If fate pursues thee, find a shelter here.
 What is it thou would'st tell me ?

Imo. 'Tis in vain to call him villain.

Oro. Call him Governor : is it not so ?

Imo. There's not another sure.

Oro. Villain's the common name of mankind here,
 But his most properly. What ! what of him ?
 I fear to be resolv'd, and must enquire.
 He had thee in his power.

Imo. I blush to think it.

Oro. Blush ! to think what ?

Imo.

Imo. That I was in his power.

Oro. He cou'd not use it?

Imo. What can't such men do?

Oro. But did he, durst he?

Imo. What he cou'd, he dar'd.

Oro. His own Gods damn him then? For ours have none,

No punishment for such unheard of crime.

Imo. This monster, cunning in his flatteries,
When he had weary'd all his uselefs arts,
Leap'd out, fierce as a beast of prey, to seize me.
I trembled, fear'd.

Oro. I fear and tremble now.

What could preserve thee? What deliver thee?

Imo. That worthy man, you us'd to call your friend.

Oro. Blandford?

Imo. Came in, and sav'd me from his rage.

Oro. He was a friend indeed, to rescue thee!

And, for his sake, I'll think it possible

A Christian may be yet an honest man.

Imo. O did you know what I have struggled thro',
To save me yours, sure you would promise me
Never to see me forc'd from you again.

Oro. To promise thee! O! do I need to promise?
But there is now no farther use of words.
Death is security for all our fears.

[*Shows Aboan's body on the floor.*]

And yet I cannot trust him.

Imo. Aboan!

Oro. Mangled and torn, resolv'd to give me time
To fit myself for what I must expect,
Groan'd out a warning to me, and expir'd.

Imo. For what you must expect?

Oro. Would that were all!

Imo. What to be butcher'd thus —

Oro. Just as thou seest.

Imo. By barb'rous hands to fall at last their prey?

Oro. I have run the race with honour, shall I now
Lag, and be overtaken at the goal?

Imo. No.

Oro. I must look back to thee.

[*Tenderly.*

Imo. You sha'not need.

I am always present to your purpose, say,
Which way would you dispose me?

Oro. Have a care.

'Thou'rt on a precipice, and dost not see
'Whither that question leads thee. O! too soon
'Thou dost enquire what the assembled Gods
'Have not determin'd, and will latest doom.
'Yet this I know of fate, this is most certain,
'I cannot, as I would, dispose of thee;
'And, as I ought, I dare not. O *Imoinda!*

Imo. Alas! that sigh! why do you tremble so?
'Nay, then 'tis bad indeed, if you can weep.

Oro. My heart runs over, if my gushing eyes
'Betray a weakness which they never knew.
'Believe, thou only, thou couldst cause these tears:
'The Gods themselves conspire with faithless men
'To our destruction.

Imo. Heav'n and earth our foes!

Oro. It is not always granted to the great:
'To be most happy: if the angry pow'rs
'Repent their favours, let 'em take 'em back:
'The hopes of empire, which they gave my youth,
'By making me a prince, I here resign.
'Let 'em quench in me all those glorious fires,
'Which kindled at their beams: that lust of fame,
'That fever of ambition, restless still,
'And burning with the sacred thirst of sway,
'Which they inspir'd, to qualify my fate,
'And makes me fit to govern under them,
'Let 'em extinguish. I submit myself
'To their high pleasure, and devoted bow:
'Yet lower, to continue still a slave;
'Hopeless of liberty: and, if I could
'Live after it, would give up honour too,
'To satisfy their vengeance, to avert
'This only curse, the curse of losing thee.

Imo. If Heav'n could be appeas'd, these cruel
'men

- ‘ Are not to be intreated or believ’d :
- ‘ O ! think on that, and be no more deceiv’d.
- ‘ *Oro.* What can we do ?
- ‘ *Imo.* Can I do any thing ?
- ‘ *Oro.* But we were born to suffer.
- ‘ *Imo.* Suffer both,
- ‘ Both die, and so prevent ’em.
- ‘ *Oro.* By thy death !
- ‘ O ! let me hunt my travell’d thoughts again ;
- ‘ Range the wide waste of desolate despair ;
- ‘ Start any hope. Alas ! I lose myself,
- ‘ ’Tis pathless, dark, and barren all to me.
- ‘ Thou art my only guide, my light of life,
- ‘ And thou art leaving me : Send out thy beams
- ‘ Upon the wing ; let ’em fly all around,
- ‘ Discover every way : Is there a dawn,
- ‘ A glimmering of comfort ? The great God,
- ‘ That rises on the world, must shine on us.
- ‘ *Imo.* And see us set before him.
- ‘ *Oro.* Thou bespeak’st,
- ‘ And goest before me.
- ‘ *Imo.* So I would in love,
- ‘ In the dear unsuspected part of life,
- ‘ In death for love. Alas ! what hopes for me ?
- ‘ I was preserv’d but to acquit myself,
- ‘ To beg to die with you.
- ‘ *Oro.* And can’st thou ask it ?
- ‘ I never durst enquire into myself
- ‘ About thy fate, and thou resolv’st it all.
- ‘ *Imo.* Alas ! my lord ! my fate’s resolv’d in yours.
- ‘ *Oro.* O ! keep thee there : Let not thy virtue shrink
- ‘ From my support, and I will gather strength,
- ‘ Fast as I can, to tell thee——
- ‘ *Imo.* I must die :
- ‘ I know ’tis fit, and I can die with you.
- ‘ *Oro.* O ! thou hast banish’d hence a thousand fears,
- ‘ Which sicken’d at my heart, and quite unmann’d me.
- ‘ *Imo.* Your fears for me ; I know you fear my strength,
- ‘ And could not overcome your tenderness,
- ‘ To pass this sentence on me : And indeed

There

' There you were kind, as I have always found you ;
 ' As you have ever been : For tho' I am
 ' Resign'd, and ready to obey my doom,
 ' Methinks it should not be pronounc'd by you.

' Oro. O ! that was all the labour of my grief.
 ' My heart and tongue forsook me in the strife ;
 ' I never could pronounce it.

' Imo. I have for you, for both of us.

' Oro. Alas ! for me ! my death
 ' I could regard as the last scene of life,
 ' And act it thro' with joy, to have it done.
 ' But then to part with thee——

' Imo. 'Tis hard to part.
 ' But parting thus, as the most happy must,
 ' Parting in death, makes it the easier.
 ' You might have thrown me off, forsaken me,
 ' And my misfortunes : That had been a death
 ' Indeed of terror, to have trembled at.

' Oro. Forsaken ! thrown thee off !

' Imo. But 'tis a pleasure more than life can give,
 ' That with unconquer'd passion, to the last,
 ' You struggle still, and fain would hold me to you.

' Oro. Ever, ever, and let those stars, which are my
 ' enemies,

' Witness against me in the other world,
 ' If I would leave this mansion of my bliss,
 ' To be the brightest ruler of their skies.
 ' O ! that we could incorporate, be one, [*Embracing her.*
 ' One body, as we have been long one mind ;
 ' That, blended so, we might together mix,
 ' And, losing thus our being to the world,
 ' Be only found to one another's joys.

' Imo. Is this the way to part ?

' Oro. Which is the way ?

' Imo. The god of love is blind, and cannot find it.
 ' But quick make haste, our enemies have eyes,
 ' To find us out, and shew us the worst way
 ' Of parting. Think on them.

' Oro. Why dost thou wake me ?

' Imo. O ! no more of love,

For,

' For, if I listen to you, I shall quite
 ' Forget my dangers, and desire to live.
 ' I can't live yours. *[Takes up the dagger.]*

Oro. ' There all the stings of death
 ' Are shot into my heart'—what shall I do?
Imo. This dagger will instruct you. *[Gives it him.]*

Oro. Ha! this dagger!
 Like fate, it points me to the horrid deed.
Imo. Strike, strike it home, and bravely save us both.
 There is no other safety.

Oro. It must be——
 But first a dying kiss—— *[Kisses her.]*
 This last embrace—— *[Embracing her.]*
 And now——

Imo. I'm ready.
 Oro. O! where shall I strike?
 Is there a smallest grain of that lov'd body
 That is not dearer to me than my eyes,
 My bosom'd heart, and all the life blood there?
 Bid me cut off these limbs, hew off these hands,
 Dig out these eyes, tho' I would keep them last
 To gaze upon thee: But to murder thee!
 The joy, and charm of ev'ry ravish'd sense,
 My wife! forbid it, nature.

Imo. 'Tis your wife,
 Who on her knees conjures you. O! in time
 Prevent those mischiefs that are falling on us.
 You may be hurry'd to a shameful death,
 And I too dragg'd to the vile governor;
 Then I may cry aloud: When you are gone,
 Where shall I find a friend again to save me?

Oro. It will be so. Thou unexampled virtue!
 Thy resolution has recover'd mine:
 And now prepare thee.

Imo. Thus, with open arms,
 I welcome you and death.

[He drops his dagger, as he looks on her, and throws himself on the ground.]

Oro. I cannot bear it.
 O let me dash against the rock of fate,

Dig

Dig up this earth, tear her bowels out,
 To make a grave, deep as the center down,
 To swallow wide and bury us together,
 It wo't be. O! then some pitying god
 (If there be one, a friend to innocence)
 Find yet a way to lay her beauties down
 Gently in death, and save me from her blood.

Imo. O rise, 'tis more than death to see you thus,
 I'll ease your love, and do the deed myself—
[She takes up the dagger, he rises in haste to take it from her.]

Oro. O! hold, I charge thee, hold.

Imo. Tho' I must own

It would be nobler for us both from you.

Oro. O! for a whirlwind's wing to hurry us
 To yonder cliff, which frowns upon the flood;
 That in embraces lock'd we might plunge in,
 And perish thus in one another's arms.

Imo. Alas! what shout is that?

Oro. I see 'em coming.

They sha'not overtake us. This last kiss,
 And now farewell.

Imo. Farewel, farewell for ever.

Oro. I'll turn my face away, and do it so.
 Now, are you ready?

Imo. Now. But do not grudge me
 The pleasure in my death of a last look;
 Pray look upon me.—Now I'm satisfied.

Oro. So fate must be by this.

[Going to stab her, he stops short; she lays her hand on his, in order to give the blow.]

Imo. Nay, then I must assist you.

And, since it is the common cause of both,
 'Tis just that both should be employ'd in it.
 Thus, thus 'tis finish'd, and I bless my fate, *[Stabs herself.]*
 That, where I liv'd, I die in these lov'd arms. *[Dies.]*

Oro. She's gone. And now all's at an end with me,
 Soft, lay her down, O we will part no more.

[Then throws himself by her.]

But let me pay the tribute of my grief,

A few sad tears to thy lov'd memory,
 And then I follow — [*Shouts*] [*Weeps over her.*
 But I stay too long. [*A noise again.*

The noise comes nearer. Hold, before I go,
 There's something would be done. It shall be so,
 And then, *Imoinda*, I'll come all to thee. [*Rises.*

[*Blandford and his party enter before the Governor and his party; swords drawn on both sides.*

Gov. You strive in vain to save him, he shall die.

Bland. Not while we can defend him with our lives.

Gov. Where is he?

Oro. Here is the wretch whom you would have.

Put up your swords, and let not civil broils

Engage you in the curst cause of one

Who cannot live, and now intreats to die.

This object will convince you.

Bland. 'Tis his wife. [*They gather about the body.*

Alas! there was no other remedy.

Gov. Who did the bloody deed?

Oro. The deed was mine:

Bloody I know it is, and I expect

Your laws should tell me so. Thus, self-condemn'd,

I do resign myself into your hands,

The hands of justice——But I hold the sword

For you——and for myself.

[*Stabs the Governor and himself, then throws himself by Imoinda's body.*

Stan. He has kill'd the Governor and stabb'd himself.

Oro. 'Tis as it should be now, I have sent his ghost
 To be a witness of that happiness

In the next world, which he deny'd us here. [*Dies.*

Bland. I hope there is a place of happiness

In the next world for such exalted virtue.

Pagan or unbeliever, yet he liv'd

To all he knew: And, if he went astray,

There's mercy still above to set him right.

But Christians, guided by the heav'nly ray,

Have no excuse if we mistake our way. [*Exeunt Omnes.*

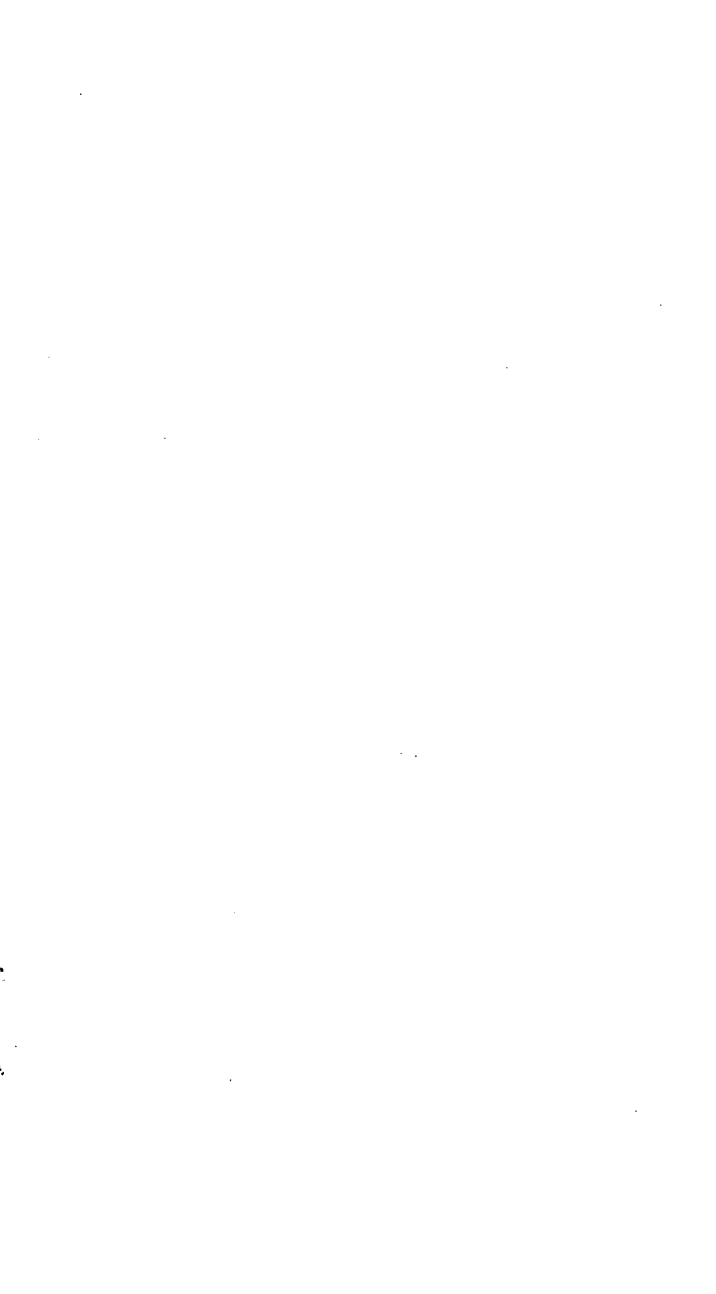
E P I L O G U E.

*YOU see we try all shapes, and shifts, and arts,
 To tempt your favours, and regain your hearts.
 We weep and laugh, join mirth and grief together,
 Like rain and sunshine mix'd, in April weather.
 Your different tastes divide our poet's cares;
 One foot the sock, t'other the buskins wears.
 Thus, while he strives to please, he's forc'd to do't,
 Like Volscius, hip hop, in a single boot.
 Critics, he knows, for this may damn his books:
 But he makes feasts for friends, and not for cooks.
 Tho' errant knights of late no favour find,
 Sure you will be to ladies errant kind,
 To follow fame, knight errants make profession:
 We damsels fly to save our reputation:
 So they their valour shew, we our discretion.
 To lands of monsters and fierce beasts they go:
 We, to those islands, where rich husbands grow:
 Tho' they're no monsters, we may make them so.
 If they're of English growth, they'll bear't with patience:
 But save us from a spouse of Oroonoko's nations:
 Then bless your stars, you happy London wives,
 Who love at large, each day, yet keep your lives:
 Nor envy poor Imoinda's doating blindness,
 We thought her husband kill'd her out of kindness.
 Death with a husband ne'er had shewn such charms,
 Had she once dy'd within a lover's arms.
 Her error was from ignorance proceeding;
 Poor soul! she wanted some of our town-breeding.
 Forgive this Indian fondness of her spouse;
 Their law no Christian liberty allows:
 Alas! they make a conscience of their vows!
 If virtue in a Heathen be a fault;
 Then damn the Heathen school where she was taught.
 She might have learn'd to cuckold, jilt, and sham,
 Had Covent-Garden been in Surinam.*



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